Secret Love Song

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by Writcraft

Summary

If there's one thing Draco's certain about, it's that Harry Potter's hiding something. When he gets to the bottom of Harry's closely guarded secret, a flippant solution brings them closer together and forces Harry to confront his past.

Notes

Thank you to birdsofshore for such a wonderful prompt, I'm sorry I fiddled with it a bit. Thank you to the mods for giving me time to get this finished during a very busy period. The chapter titles and quotes at the beginning of each chapter are from Taylor Swift's 'Blank Space' (Chapter One), 'Style' (Chapter Two) and 'Wildest Dream' (Chapter Three). The title is inspired by Little Mix and 'Secret Love Song Part II.' Pop music ate my brain when I was writing this.

Stolen Kisses, Pretty Lies

Ain't it funny, rumours fly and I know you heard about me, so hey, let's be friends, I'm dyin' to see how this one ends...got a long list of ex-lovers, they'll tell you I'm insane but I got a blank space baby, and I'll write your name

Draco scrubs his shirt with soap and water. Whatever the substance is on the collar, it's clearly impervious to any cleaning spell. He sniffs tentatively at the material and tries not to wince at the way the stain spreads over the silk. It's his favourite shirt. Not because it's Saint Laurent, but because it hugs and clings in all the right places. Draco doesn't have much besides his money and his looks. A good outfit is like armour, these days. The shirt folds just above the wrist, loose and cool in the summer without revealing the Dark Mark on his forearm or the etchings on the skin of a desperate man, sitting in his room with a razor and a belly full of regret.

Draco closes his eyes and squeezes the material in his hands. He takes the cool air into his lungs with a greedy gulp. He doesn't want to catch sight of his scarred arm in the mirror or see the lines on his torso under the too bright Ministry bathroom lighting. He doesn't know why the Ministry ever thought it would be a good idea to replicate something as hideously unflattering as fluorescent lighting through magical means. He blames Arthur Weasley for poor Muggle related decision making. He opens his eyes and blinks at himself. He's all sharp edges and his skin is so white it's almost translucent. He runs a finger along his jaw and imagines how he might look, bloodied and wrecked. It's how he feels. If the spells and whispers landed like punches, he would be black and blue.

"Sorry, I-"

"Don't worry." Draco looks up. Potter stands by the sink, the door swinging behind him. A cool gust of air enters the room and then there's silence, with Potter shuffling awkwardly in place looking as if he'd rather be anywhere else than next to Draco. "I'm leaving in a minute."

"Everything okay?" Potter can't seem to meet Draco's gaze head on. His cheeks take on a peculiar colour and his eyes flick to Draco's naked torso and then up to the ceiling. He breathes out, shaky and slow. "Why aren't you wearing a shirt?"

Draco stares at Potter and lets out a soft snort. Potter's so prissy. It kills Draco. *Kills* him. He manages a smirk, the veneer of bravado a well-practiced reaction to being in Potter's presence.

"I was hoping a nice wizard might come along and suck me off. Being half naked lets him know I'm available. You've read the papers, Potter. Why else do you think I might strip off in the men's bathroom?" Draco's fairly sure Potter won't have missed the countless men photographed with Draco in the *Prophet*. There was a particularly fine one of Draco with two wizards in a dark corner of a private members' bar which earned him two Howlers from his father and more than a few stares when he went about his business that week. People might not trust Draco, but that doesn't

seem to stop them wanting to fuck him. They're usually curious enough about the size of Draco's trust fund and other appendages to overlook the unsavoury Malfoy association for a night of pleasure and fine dining.

The colour in Potter's cheeks deepens and he rubs his hand over the scruff on his chin. Potter's a fucking mess. Don't think Draco hasn't heard the rumours. Merlin only knows what goes on in that head of his, but whatever it is he seems to be pretty good at dulling errant thoughts with too much beer. He's always stumbling out of one bar or another with his arm around Weasley, whispering something and laughing too long and too loud so nobody notices he's coming apart at the seams. Draco notices. He's good at recognising the signs.

Potter glares as he finally meets Draco's eyes. "Don't be a prick."

Draco sighs, the fight going out of him. He tugs on the shirt which is still wet around the collar, contemplating Potter. "When am I ever anything else? There was a spell of some sort. It caught the shirt. I was trying to clean it."

"Oh." Potter moves closer, studying the material. His throat works as he swallows, his fingers hovering by the collar. He's close enough that Draco can smell his clean soapiness and light cologne. It's all he can do to stop himself from breathing in. "Any luck?"

"Not really." Draco begins to button up his shirt, suddenly feeling exposed. One of these days it would be nice if someone other than Potter found him sobbing into the bathroom sink.

"It doesn't look too bad. Just a bit wet." Potter fingers the collar before pulling his hand away as if the damp silk burns his skin. He's such an odd creature. Draco wonders what it's like to inhabit Potter's mind. It's probably full of noble deeds and the odd fantasy of semi-clothed witches casting spells at one another, shouting things like 'No, *I'll* defend the world from evil doers!'

"I suppose I'll see you around," Draco says. He doubts he will. He and Potter don't exactly move in the same circles, for obvious reasons.

"Yeah." Potter's gaze fixes on the bit of exposed collarbone beneath the open neck of the shirt. It's one of the best parts of Draco's body, if he does say so himself. One wizard described Draco's collarbone as *very lickable* which made him feel like an ice-lolly and completely ruined the mood. He's not a dessert, thank you very much. "I'll see you around, Malfoy."

Draco meets Potter's gaze and tries to decipher the meaning behind the shiver of uncertainty which passes over his eyes. He can't. He doesn't know Potter well enough. Draco just knows enough about his own flawlessly constructed public mask to suspect that Potter's hiding something and he's not half as happy as he wants people to believe.

He gives Potter a nod and opens the door to breathe in anything other than the air between he and Potter, which crackles with tension and memories of a past Draco desperately wants to forget.

"See you around, Potter."

He won't. Draco's sure of it.

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There's an article in the *Prophet* which suggests Potter's losing his marbles. The pictures capture a haunted looking Potter, coming out of a Muggle store with a couple of bags in his hands. He's got his hand up to the camera and his expression is one of barely concealed anger. He looks as though he hasn't shaved for a few days and he pushes his way through the crowds of Muggles wondering why they don't recognise the celebrity of the moment. The press started to infiltrate more Muggle spaces after the war when the biggest players went into hiding. They learned to use fancy Muggle cameras and took great delight in publishing still photographs which, for wizards, were as revolutionary as moving ones would be to Muggles.

Draco feels strangely sad looking at the pictures of Potter. He obviously wasn't expecting an ambush and he's been out of work on a 'break' for the past few days. Draco knows about Potter's breaks. He might have had an unorthodox nose through the files a few months ago. He knows that there are periods of time when Potter takes some time out to recuperate. He's not sure what that means, but he suspects recuperation is a euphemism for a deeper problem. He wonders whether it's the war or something else and how much Potter tells the people he's closest to. He pushes the paper to one side and sighs. He really does spend far too much time thinking about Potter's life. His own night is splashed on the opposing page, his smile fixed and unreal as another wizard clutches his hand. Draco can't even remember his name. Barry, something. He wanted to call Draco 'Daddy' which led to Draco promptly losing his erection and and Barry – or was it Larry? – being booted out on his arse. The last thing Draco wants in bed is anything that reminds him of his father, even if his latest conquest did have a very pretty cock and a sinful mouth.

He wonders what Potter's up to now and whether he's still barrelling around in that dark space at Grimmauld Place. Draco folds the paper and sips his coffee, contemplating his surroundings. It's purely a coincidence that he's here, close to the Black property. It's just happenstance that he's drinking coffee in a place Potter's been photographed in on several occasions getting his caffeine fix.

"Malfoy?"

Draco looks up, trying to ignore the way his heart hammers restlessly in his chest. "Potter. Fancy seeing you here."

Potter frowns, looking confused. "Don't you live West? Somewhere posh and expensive?"

Draco snorts and he shakes his head. "I have property all over London, Potter. I know how to invest my Galleons." Admittedly he doesn't have property in this precise location, but Potter doesn't need to know that. Besides, the coffee's good. That's all.

"Oh." Potter stands awkwardly, a takeaway coffee in hand. "Mind if I join you?"

"Nope." Draco nods at the paper. "I was just looking at your starring moment."

"Oh, that." Potter pulls a face and slides into the seat opposite Draco. "I just wanted to buy some pants. Fucking press."

Christ, Draco doesn't need to think about Potter's pants. He shifts in his chair as surreptitiously as he can, eyeing him curiously. "You're off at the minute?"

"Just until the end of the week." Potter shrugs. "It's something I agreed with Kingsley a while ago."

“Why?” Draco can’t help but be intrigued by Potter’s mysterious disappearances, not that he expects to be given all the detail. They’re hardly friends, he and Potter.

“I need time to myself. I see someone to work through some…things.” Potter smiles and it doesn’t meet his eyes. “Good enough gossip for you? Perhaps Skeeter’s right. I’m going a bit mad.”

“You and me both,” Draco mutters. He can’t help but resent the implication he’s here for gossip. If Potter knew why Draco was here, he’d have a fit. There’s nothing more distressing than trying to conceal a ridiculous obsession with the straight boy who doesn’t know you exist.

“You’re not in work today?” Potter looks curious, watching Draco a little too closely for comfort. There’s something about conversing with Potter that makes Draco feel as though he’s wearing his bloody heart on his chest and Potter’s eyes can see the whole of him.

“Week off. Like you.”

“Probably not exactly the same.” Potter winces and he gestures to the paper. “Sorry. Could you put that thing away?”

“Of course.” Draco pushes the paper into his bag and he takes a steady sip of his coffee. “Any plans for the week?”

“Not much.” Potter turns his coffee in his hands.

“If you ever fancy doing your bit for interhouse relations, I’d be happy to buy you a glass of something expensive one evening. You can usually find me in Cellar Gascon off Diagon Alley. I’m there on Thursday evenings from around seven.” Draco isn’t sure why he’s explaining the geography of wizarding enclaves to Potter. Despite the fact he’s never seen Potter in Cellar Gascon, he’s fairly certain someone making their way through the Auror ranks at lightning speed is familiar with the basic layout of wizarding London’s winding streets and alleys. He’s also not sure why on earth he’s inviting Potter to join him for drinks. Even if Potter did decide to show up the silence is already thick and uncomfortable enough that Draco suddenly finds himself wanting to get as far away from Potter as possible.

“Oh.” Potter looks surprised, as well he should be. Draco’s bloody surprised and it was his invitation. “I’m not sure what I’m up to on Thursday, there’s a pub quiz at the Leaky.” He waves his hand looking embarrassed. “I’ll see what I can do, but we do it every week. I’m not sure I can just cancel.”

“Of course not.” Draco keeps his voice smooth. “I imagine your extensive knowledge of poorly performing Quidditch teams and terrible fashion choices are a real asset. It was just a thought. Enjoy your quiz.” He stands and nods at Potter. “I’ll see you around.”

“Malfoy.” Potter sounds a bit desperate and he reaches for Draco, grabbing his hand before dropping it as if the touch burns. He rakes his eyes over Draco and breathes out just once, slow and tremulous. Draco knows why *he’s* all over the place, given his pathetic attachment to the hero of the wizarding world, but he doesn’t know what’s up with Potter or why he’s suddenly so flushed and nervous looking. “I mean, I could try and make it. I’m crap at the quiz anyway.”

“Fine. In that case I might see you Thursday.” Draco keeps his voice smooth, making sure he doesn’t sound as sceptical as he most definitely is. There’s not a kneazle in hell’s chance of Potter turning up to share awkward conversation and a 1998 Chateau Neuf with Draco.

With a final nod in Potter's direction, Draco leaves. He casts one look back at Potter, watching him through the window. He's frowning and uncertain, lost in his own head. He looks comfortably rumpled and so good it takes Draco's breath away.

With a muttered curse, Draco walks from the coffee shop as quickly as he can and spends the rest of the day trying not to replay the conversation over and over in his brain.

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Draco nearly chokes on his olive when Potter turns up on Thursday night, just after eight. He stands in the door and looks around, tugging his bottom lip between his teeth. He nudges his glasses onto his nose and finally sees Draco. His face breaks into a slow smile and his cheeks flush pleasantly. Draco rakes his eyes over Potter, wondering what on earth he's up to. He's dressed up. Draco's seen enough of Potter in the press to know Leaky attire is strictly ripped jeans and a Muggle band t-shirt. On a cold night, Potter sometimes brings out some distressed looking brown leather thing which fits him sinfully well. Bomber jackets, too. Potter likes those. The khaki ones they sell in all the Muggle shops on buy one get one free. Tonight Potter's put on a blazer jacket, which fits as well as the bombers do. It's nipped in at the waist and instead of a t-shirt he's sporting a peculiar patterned shirt which looks almost like the kind of thing Draco would wear when he's pulling out all the stops. The jeans are dark and they don't have any rips in them and he's got on proper black shoes – boots – which do a far better job setting off his delectable legs than sloppy canvas trainers and distressed denim.

Draco swallows, dabbing his mouth with a napkin largely to mask the fact his jaw might have actually dropped for a moment at the sight of Potter. Potter, dressed to impress. It's disarming and disconcerting. It absolutely shouldn't be allowed and confirms this whole *interhouse* bullshit was a terrible fucking idea.

"Evening. I thought I'd try something different for a change." Potter slips onto the bar stool next to Draco, reaching over and pinching a salted almond. He shrugs off his jacket and the shirt is *definitely* something posh and ridiculous.

"That shirt, for example." Draco gestures for another glass and pours Potter some wine, hoping his hand doesn't tremble. "That's a new look on you."

"Don't you like it?" Potter frowns, looking down at himself and tugging the collar a little. "I wasn't sure what to wear so I dug this out of the cupboard. I think it belonged to Sirius."

"It does have something of the nineteen seventies about it." Draco rolls his eyes but really it's all for show. Potter looks good enough to eat and the fact he's wearing Black's old shirt makes Draco's heart skip in his chest. No wonder it looks expensive. It's probably vintage Gucci. Trust Potter to reach into a wardrobe that probably smells of mothballs and pick out something that makes Draco want to fuck him into next week. Too much natural charm, that boy. The fact he's unaware of his impact on people makes the whole situation even more wretched.

"Is it okay? That I came?" Potter's lips curve into a tentative smile and it's a bit like staring into the sun straight on. Blinding and too much all at once. Draco has to look away, busying himself with spearing an olive with a toothpick.

"I invited you, didn't I?" Christ knows why. Draco's an idiot. His father's right about that. "I didn't think you'd come."

“Ah.” Potter fiddles with the stem of his glass before shrugging. “I wasn’t sure I would. I went to the quiz earlier but I left to come here.”

Why Draco wants to ask, but doesn’t. “You went to the quiz dressed like something from Italian Vogue?” The words slip out apparently, when Potter’s around.

“Ron said I looked like a right ponce.” Potter grins, then he takes a gulp of his drink. “No offence.”

“Oh please, none taken.” Draco gives Potter a glare.

“I just…” Potter breathes out and it trembles around the edges. “I just thought it might be nice. To do something different. To catch up on old times.”

Draco stares at Potter. “Old times? Are you mad?”

Potter laughs. “Well, school. We can talk about our friends or the Ministry.”

Draco rolls his eyes. “We don't exactly have the same friends. I can't imagine you're interested in hearing about Zabini's love life or Nott's latest property purchase. Perhaps we can just reminisce about how much we hated each other instead?”

“I didn’t hate you.” Potter narrows his eyes, studying Draco. “Not really.”

“Oh.” Draco can’t help but feel deflated. At least if you’re hated, you matter. Better to be hated than to be nobody. He spears another olive and chews it contemplatively. “I hated you. I’m not sure how I feel these days.”

“No?” Potter looks curious. He twists his glass and watches the liquid slide down the sides. “Do you come here a lot? It’s nice.”

“It does the job.” Draco leans forward a little. “Sometimes when wizards like other wizards, they buy an expensive bottle of champagne and sit here looking gorgeous until an attractive man joins them. This is a good place for that.”

Potter laughs again, rich and low. “Is it? I wouldn’t know.” He cocks his head to one side and nods at the half-finished bottle of red. “Not on the pull tonight, then?”

“I’ll have you know that’s a very good bottle.” Draco runs a hand through his hair and gives Potter his best smirk. “Besides, they don’t just come over here for the booze.”

Potter hums around the glass, taking a sip. He’s smiling, damn him. Draco feels as if he’s losing the upper hand. Not that he ever really had it in the first place, where Potter’s concerned. “I bet.”

“I imagine it’s a bit different if you’ve got witches throwing themselves at you on a daily basis,” Draco says. Apart from a fleeting post-war year with Ginny Weasley, he hasn't seen any pictures of Potter with other witches. He doesn't count Lovegood and Granger, the two most frequently in Potter's presence. Both are taken and besides, Draco's never really thought of either of them as Potter's type. Not that he's given much thought to the kind of person Potter might settle down with. The fact Potter seems to have no interest in capitalising on his eligible bachelor status is just another reason for Draco’s suspicions that not all is well in the world of Potter’s peculiar brain. But then, what does he know?Being alone would be more satisfying than most of Draco's dates these days.

“I don’t go for that much.” Potter pulls a face, a shadow crossing his features. “Not my thing.”

“Really?” Draco stares at Potter. “Not hankering after a wife and a couple of little Potters running around a small house in the countryside?”

Potter winces, shaking his head. “Not exactly, no.”

“So there’s no one keeping that bed of yours warm at night?” Draco eats another olive, watching the way heat rises in Potter’s neck and colours his cheeks. Something about this discussion is making Potter decidedly uncomfortable and Draco’s prepared to admit he’s rather enjoying it. “How disappointing. I thought you might be the type to have a scandalous secret love life.”

“You did?” Potter’s eyes widen and he focuses on Draco with an intensity that sends Draco’s heart tripping in his chest. “What makes you think that?”

“Because it’s far more interesting to speculate about leather and sex dungeons that to accept you really are just painfully vanilla.” Draco shrugs. He’s not sure why he’s so invested in Potter’s love life. It probably *is* boring. Not that Draco cares.

"That's your scene then, is it? Leather and sex dungeons?" Potter looks sceptical and Draco frowns at him. Draco could be into that, if he could be bothered to find anyone he's willing to invest the time in. He resents the implication his own sex life might be a bit dull.

"It could be. I don't like to rule anything out." Draco gives Potter a look up and down. "I'll try anything once."

“I'm sure." Potter snorts, shaking his head. He takes a sip of his wine, still studying Draco. “Do you have anyone special? Or is that all a bit too *boring* for you?”

Draco’s not sure what he’s done to make Potter sound fierce and angry, but he doesn’t miss the way Potter’s hand tightens on his glass and his lips press into a thin line.

“Hardly. Too many men, too little time. You’ve read the papers.”

“Funnily enough I don’t believe everything Skeeter prints.” Potter rolls his eyes. “Don’t you ever want more?”

Draco looks away and takes his time pouring them both glasses of water. “You assume I’m capable of more.”

“That wasn’t my question.”

“No,” Draco concedes. “But it’s my answer.” He lifts his glass and tips it towards Potter. “Cheers.”

“Cheers.” Potter looks down at his glass, lost in thought.

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After more awkward small talk than Draco would usually stomach on a Thursday night, Potter pauses and he seems to be wrestling with something. “How can you be so open about being gay? Doesn’t it make things difficult?”

Draco shrugs. He's not going to lie and pretend that his father respects his decisions. He's not going to pretend that the spells cast always come from a place of hating his past. There are definitely people who hate his present. "Sometimes."

"I'm sorry." Potter sounds a bit lost when he says it, as if he's personally sending Howlers and calling Draco all kinds of charming things.

"Don't be." Draco looks down. "What could you do anyway?"

Potter shifts and looks away and then suddenly it hits Draco, with blinding clarity. Potter's *gay*. Bi, possibly. Whatever he is, he's not straight. That's why he's here all dressed up to the nines, sipping wine and making a valiant attempt at polite conversation like he's on a date. God, are they on a *date*? Draco swallows because he's not sure he's ready for this. He feels like someone should have told him. He's definitely not okay with being blindsided by Potter coming out over a glass of something rich and expensive.

"Potter…"

"Please don't," Potter says. There's something desperate in Potter's tone. Something that says *don't say it out loud*. Draco recognises that stomach rolling feeling of panic all too well. He remembers the hours it took for him to tell his mother and father and with a powerful whoosh the memory of his father looking at him with a sneer floods his mind. Of course Potter doesn't want to be gay. Potter doesn't want to be interested in someone like Draco and have to look at Weasley over tea and toast in the morning. He wants a nice comfortable life which doesn't involve Slytherins who almost brought the whole world to its knees. The shame claws through Draco and he scratches the marks on his arm, under his shirt. If Potter ever *does* come out, it's going to be with someone appropriate. Someone who absolutely isn't Draco.

"What is this?" Draco gestures between them, his mouth dry and his words rough.

Potter at least has the gumption to meet Draco's eyes, despite the pink heat in his cheeks. "I thought it might be nice."

"Give a man some warning, next time." Draco holds Potter's gaze. He swallows, wondering why his words feel like they might choke him. When it looks as though Potter's going to bolt, he manages to force out the closest thing to the truth he can manage. "Relax, Potter. It *is* nice."

Potter relaxes a little, his shoulders losing something of the previous tightness. "Good. I'm…good. How's your mum?"

Draco laughs and he shakes his head at Potter. "No you don't. We're not making polite conversation. Not when you can't even tell me what you think we're doing here."

"I don't know." Potter sounds wretched and his hands shake as he pushes them together, trying to steady them. "I don't know what I am or what I'm doing anymore."

"I think you know exactly who you are." Draco leans forward, making sure no one else can overhear. "Have you ever done this before?" He lets his fingers trail lightly over the denim on Potter's knee and he keeps his voice quiet. "It helps to let the other wizard know he's on a *date*, Potter. It sets certain expectations."

Potter looks a bit green and wild-eyed, as if he's a deer caught in the light from a hurriedly cast *Lumos*. "There aren't *any* expectations on my end. None." He sounds like he's trying to convince himself as much as anything.

"Aren't there?" Draco removes his fingers from Potter's leg and contemplates him. It's probably best not to fondle Potter too obviously in public as much as he might want to do so. He doesn't want to inadvertently out him, and the press have spies everywhere these days.

"No." Potter sounds firm. He takes a long gulp of his wine and wipes the back of his hand across his lips. "I don't…do this."

"Yet here you are." Draco snorts. If there's one thing he expects from Potter by default, it's bravery. Stormy determination and the desire to fight injustice. He can't even fight for himself. Draco doesn't know whether to feel desperately sad or disappointed. "You must be curious."

Potter nods, almost imperceptibly. "I suppose."

Draco narrows his eyes. "If you're determined not to be gay, you're a wizard. There are options."

"Like what?" Potter's brow furrows.

"A one night stand and *Obliviate*, for a start." Draco watches Potter's reaction, meaning the comment as a throwaway suggestion as opposed to an offer, but Potter stares at Draco and, oh. Draco's heart clenches in his chest and he shrugs like it doesn't matter. Like it doesn't fucking cut through him and steal his breath away. He takes another breath and it shakes at the edges when he exhales. "I can, if you like. Your call."

"Okay," says Potter. Soft, sweet and breaking Draco's heart with two innocuous syllables. "Okay, maybe just to…see."

Draco tops up their wine. He has a feeling they're going to need it.

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Draco has his own place right in the heart of Diagon Alley. Not many people know he lives there, because he tries to avoid sharing his address with people who would give all their Galleons to see him in Azkaban. He doesn't mind with Potter. Not least because Potter's going to forget about all of this soon enough, anyway.

Draco shrugs off his jacket and takes Potter's, the silence in the air thick between them.

"What do you want?"

Potter shakes his head, his cheeks flushed. "I have no bloody idea. Have you got wine?"

Of course Potter has to be drunk to be with Draco. He tries not to bristle and nods, wondering not for the first time what he's doing with his life. This is more fucked up than anything he's done recently and Draco's done a lot of fucked up things.

"Here." Draco pours them both a glass and sits on the sofa, watching Potter. He's so restless. He looks as though he can't sit still, shifting and tugging at the collar of the shirt. He looks so good but Draco thinks he prefers Potter in his haphazard cosy jumpers with awkwardly placed letters or a Golden Snitch on the front. He likes Potter best when he's effortless, relaxed in his comfortable

clothes and laughing as if it takes him by surprise. As if in that moment he wonders how he forgot how to laugh and when he'll be able to do so again. Now, he's tense and dolled up with his brow furrowed as he stares at his wine. Draco sighs. "Relax, will you?"

"I…" Potter looks as though he wants to say something, his Adam's apple working. Then he puts his wine down and moves closer, his fingers on Draco's collar and his eyes lowered. "They hit you with a spell. Why?"

"I don't *know*, Potter." Draco can't help but snap. "Because I was a Death Eater. Because I cosied up to the Dark Lord before I realised what an insufferable prick he was. Because I'm bent. Take your pick."

Potter stares at Draco and then he lurches forward, all brute force and reckless inability to control himself. The kiss is sloppy and messy with far too much teeth and tongue. Draco pushes Potter back after a moment. He trails a line of kisses up Potter's neck, breathing against his skin until Potter shivers under his palm.

"Steady, will you. You're not a bull and I'm not a china shop."

"What?" Potter's eyes are dark and lidded and Draco wants to bite marks along every bit of exposed skin. He wants to *ruin* Potter.

"Never mind. Just…come here." Draco tugs Potter closer and takes control of the kiss. Potter's remarkably pliant when Draco's in charge. He huffs out a low breath and it makes Draco shiver with pleasure. When he asked Potter for a drink he didn't expect to find himself snogging on his sofa like a teenager. The kiss is lazy, slow and searching but there's an urgency behind it. Draco presses his palm against Potter's chest and he can feel the pounding beat of Potter's restless heart mirroring his own. He slides his other hand into Potter's messy tangle of hair and urges him closer, deeper into the kiss. When a small groan of appreciation escapes Potter's parted lips, it sends sparks of pleasure through Draco. Potter's handsy when he's kissing and it's like he can't get enough of running his hands over Draco's torso or around to his back to feel along the knobs of Draco's spine. It's deliciously distracting and hotter than it has any right to be.

With a low murmur of *Harry* in Potter's ear, Draco pushes him back a little. He goes easily, stretched out on the sofa. He's dishevelled and his lips are red and plump from kissing. He looks at Draco with dark, stormy eyes and he reaches out a hand to pull Draco down with him. They fit together on the sofa surprisingly well. Draco slots between Potter's legs and lets Potter push against him, a messy sprawl of limbs. Potter grinds up and his breathing is ragged and disjointed. Potter's hot breath trembles against Draco's skin and it's so good it becomes almost painful, his cock hard in the confines of his tight jeans.

As the kisses become more breathless, Potter's cheeks become more flushed. It's glorious. Draco slides his hands under that infernal shirt and touches Potter's skin at the points where his heart beats, his pulse skips and his skin is hot and perspiring. Draco gives Potter some friction where he's grinding helplessly up against Draco. With a low groan in Potter's mouth, Draco unbuckles Potter's belt and feels the way his stomach jumps as Potter gasps at the touch.

"Malfoy…" There's a hesitancy to Potter's tone even as he bucks up restlessly towards Draco's hand. Draco leaves his hand where it is, over the buckle of Potter's belt and gives him a moment.

"No?" Draco pauses, dragging his knuckles in a slow, deliberate line along the impressive bulge in Potter's trousers.

“I…” Potter swallows and then he claws at Draco’s back, pulling him closer. “Fuck it. Yes. God, yes.” He kisses Draco again, hot and open mouthed. His lips and tongue seem eager to drive Draco into a blissful Potter-shaped oblivion.

Draco finally opens Potter’s trousers and pushes his hand inside to find him hard and wanting. He palms at Potter over his cotton boxers at first, thumb circling the damp patch on the material. Potter’s so hot and ready, Draco can feel every twitch and pulse beneath his fingers. He tries to get into a position where he can push his hand inside the boxers and he groans when he finally makes skin on skin contact, wrapping his fingers around Potter’s length.

Draco’s surprised to feel trembling fingers against his own trousers as Potter breathes low and rough into Draco’s mouth. They’re hardly kissing at all now, just breathing into one another’s open mouths, groaning and whispering against one another’s lips. Draco lets Potter open his belt and then he arranges them so they’re in the most comfortable position they can be with their hands shoved in one another’s pants. Potter is driving Draco insane and it’s all he can do to remind himself he’s done this a hundred times before, while Potter’s probably touching another man’s prick for the first time in his life.

With a low growl at *that* delicious thought, Draco strokes Potter until he’s murmuring Draco’s name over and over. Draco would be proud if he didn’t already know Potter’s just in this for tonight. He’s already dreading the fact he’s going to wipe this memory from Potter’s mind. He wants this to be at that forefront of Potter’s thoughts every day. He wants to occupy every private moment Potter has when no prying eyes are trying to find out who his current flame is. He *wants*. Potter’s touch is uncertain and tentative, but when he gets the angle right at last it’s perfect. There’s something far too charming about the fact Potter isn’t perfect at first. He’s got an easy confidence about him but in this he seems almost lost, caught up in his own heady pleasure.

With a groan, Draco bucks into Potter’s fist and then Potter’s coming with a surprised, bitten-off cry. It’s not long before Draco follows. They stretch out on the sofa and catch their breath. When Draco presses his lips to Potter’s once again, Potter’s lips are salty and his cheeks are damp with tears.

“Christ, it was just a fucking hand job, Potter. I know I’m good, but there’s really no need to cry on my sofa.”

“Sorry, I…” Potter sits and casts a cleaning charm with a powerful burst of magic. It feels more unstable than anything Potter usually does. He looks wrecked with his hair all over the place and his cheeks hot red. He scrubs his eyes with the back of his hand and just like that he’s somewhere else. He’s got the same look he had when he first saw Draco in the bathrooms and the same twisted expression when he asked if Draco found it *difficult* to be out. Draco feels like he should reassure Potter, but part of him still smarts from the way Potter seems so obviously disgusted with himself.

“Oh, relax. I’ll do the spell.” Draco tries not to sound as uneasy as he feels about it, tucking himself away and casting his own cleaning charm. “I’ll take away all of it if you like? Pretend tonight never happened?”

“Just. Just this.” Potter’s got his head in his hands and he lets out another humourless laugh. “I could have another glass of wine.”

“What if it happens again?”

Potter looks up and he shakes his head. “It won’t.”

Draco's heart clenches in his chest and he takes out his wand. That's pretty bloody clear, then. The spell is complicated, thinking about the bits he needs to make hazy around the edges and the modifications he needs to make but he's an accomplished Legilemens and he's studied memory charms and memory modification for the last couple of years. It's his specialty. It's probably why Potter came to him, he thinks bitterly.

"Wait." Potter stills Draco's hand, leaning in.

When they kiss this time, it's sweet and slow and it tastes like tears and goodbye. Draco weaves the spell as he pulls away and then Potter's looking at him, blinking into the night. He nudges his glasses up on his nose and he looks around the room.

"I…don't remember getting here. Am I drunk?"

Draco shrugs and tops up their wine. "A bit. Don't worry Potter, I've seen worse."

Potter takes a sip of his wine and it feels like years before they talk again, stilted and formal as if the kisses never happened. Which, for Potter, they never did.

That James Dean, Daydream Look in Your Eye

I should just tell you to leave 'cause I, know exactly where it leads but I, watch it go round and round each time.

You got that James Dean, daydream look in your eye...and when we go crashing down, we come back every time...we never go out of style

Draco makes a pretty good go at avoiding Potter for the next few days. The memory of Harry's kisses still burn hot on Draco's lips when he's alone at night but he keeps the *Prophet* talking with a string of messy-haired dates that don't really go anywhere and does his best to forget. He throws himself into his work and tells himself he's close to consigning his night with Potter to distant memory, when there's a knock at his door.

"Can I come in?" Potter leans against the open door frame and the emotions he's been trying so hard to suppress slam through Draco, taking his breath away. Potter looks *good*. He looks well-rested, a bit uncertain and like he genuinely wants to see Draco which is the worst part in this whole horrible mess. Well fuck Potter. Draco doesn't want to be part of his strange games again. He just wants to live his life and banish all memories of Potter from his mind. Perhaps *he* needs Obliviating too.

"Potter." Draco does that thing he's seen other people do where they put down their quills slowly as if they're doing something very important and hate to be interrupted. It's a trick he learned from Severus, together with the ability to stalk impressively in wizarding robes and curl his lips into a sneer. "Can I help you?"

"I don't know." Potter looks uncertain, his brow furrowed. "I think I owe you a drink or something. I don't remember paying for any of the wine and we must have had three bottles between us."

Draco arches his eyebrow at Potter. He's not going there again, not for all the gold in Gringotts. "I've got it covered, thanks. I'm a *Malfoy*. That means I'm rich, Potter. I can afford a measly bottle of wine or three."

"Oh." Potter looks over his shoulder then shuts the door behind him, effectively trapping Draco in the office. Close proximity is the last thing he needs, with Potter looking so fit and comfortable. His usual casual garb suits him far better than the fancy shirt and jacket from the ill-fated night at Cellar Gascon. He looks more in control of himself, pulling up a chair and fiddling with things on Draco's desk as if he has every right to be there.

"I'm *working*." Draco isn't. He's spent far too many hours thinking about Potter who disappeared on some kind of dangerous mission shortly after their night together. He might have had a panic attack about wiping Potter's memory incorrectly and wondering if Potter would still be able to cast the necessary spells to fight whatever monsters he was chasing. He needn't have worried. If anything, Potter looks better than ever. He's tanned and relaxed. Perhaps a quick shag and memory modification is good for him.

“I wanted to come and see you because I had fun." Potter laughs low in his throat and his cheeks flush. "At least I think I did. I’d like to do it again, if you're game. My treat, this time. For interhouse relations or whatever you said.” Potter smiles and he looks sheepish. This time Draco knows exactly why, but he chooses to ignore it. That way, madness lies.

“I’ve told you, I don’t need repayment.”

“It’s not that. I just said I had fun.” Potter shrugs. “Didn’t you?”

Draco resists the urge to laugh because *fun* doesn’t begin to cover it. The part of him that’s still a mean bastard wants to let Potter know exactly how much fun they both had, but he swallows it down.

“Could have been worse, I suppose.”

“Well, then,” Potter says, as if it’s all decided. “Let me choose the place this time. Somewhere Muggle.” He winks at Draco with familiar ease. “Somewhere more casual, maybe? I'd rather not wear a shirt that smells like mothballs again if it's all the same to you.”

Draco has first hand knowledge that Potter's distinctive, light cologne and soapy skin are far more overpowering than a bit of dusty cotton - particularly when combined with the heady scent of Potter's arousal and the light taste of expensive wine on his lips. Not that he's going to say as much to Potter. “I suppose we could go out again if you insist. I’ve got a bit of time on Friday.”

Potter stands, stuffing his hands into his pockets. He looks pleased with himself. “Friday it is. I’ll meet you by the Nando’s off Carnaby Street.”

Draco wrinkles his nose. “I’m not eating fried chicken with you.”

Potter laughs and the sound worms its way through Draco’s veins. “We’re not going to eat. I know a place nearby.”

Draco busies himself shuffling some papers as if he’s got lots of important things to get back to. “Friday it is, then.”

“Yeah. Seven thirty.” Potter gives Draco a wide smile. When he leaves he’s whistling and it’s all Draco can do not to chuck his paperweight at the door.

This is a terrible idea. He’s pretty sure this *thing* whatever it is isn’t going to end well for either of them.

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Draco doesn’t really do casual so he dresses as he usually does with an expensive shirt and some dark jeans which look as if they might have been painted on. He puts a jumper over the shirt in an attempt to dress down a bit, not that he cares about living up – or down – to Potter’s questionable fashion choices. He supposes he might as well make some effort if Potter’s going to dig out musty shirts just so he can break Draco’s heart in two after a heated snog and some memory modification.

“Not again,” Draco tells himself firmly. No matter how good Potter looks, he’s not going to suffer the indignity of being forgotten about as soon as the deed’s done.

“What’s that?” Potter appears as if from nowhere, smiling and confident.

“Nothing.” Draco peers over Potter’s shoulder as if whatever dreadful bar Potter’s chosen might suddenly materialise. “I can’t imagine there’s anywhere decent to drink around here.”

“You’d be surprised.” Potter waits for Draco to fall into step beside him and gives him a look out of the corner of his eye. “I think I’m better on the beers. Wine does funny things to my head. I had a right headache the morning after our drinks and it was like part of the night was missing.” He laughs and there’s an edge of nervousness to it. “I hope I didn’t say anything stupid.”

“No more stupid than usual,” Draco mutters. He changes the subject before he can disclose exactly what Potter did. He has a feeling that kind of revelation might send him running for the hills and as much as he hates to admit it, he doesn’t want Potter going anywhere. “I would have thought you'd have plans on a Friday night.”

“You too.” Potter gestures down a side street Draco’s never noticed before. “This way. You’re usually out over the weekend.”

“If that’s a polite way of saying someone’s usually photographing me going home with my latest shag, you’re right.” Draco snorts, shaking his head. “I’m sure the clubs won’t miss me too much for one night. Besides, there’s always time to meet a Muggle later.”

Potter looks a bit fierce, his expression cloudy. “Well, if you like I suppose. There are load of clubs around here.”

Draco arches his eyebrows. “You’d know, would you?”

Potter gives Draco a strange look. “It’s the West End. Of course there are clubs.”

Draco decides to let the fact Potter’s being particularly obtuse pass. Now he knows what he does, he wonders if Potter’s ever been inside a gay bar. He imagines Potter stripping down to a tight white top and grinding against someone completely unworthy, flushed and sweating. He’s not ashamed to admit the thought sends hot pleasure through his body. He realises he’s got the upper hand knowing something Potter doesn’t remember telling him. Wherever this strange night ends up, Draco’s determined to remember that.

When they reach a little pub tucked away on a cobbled street, Draco ducks inside. It’s busy but not three deep at the bar kind of busy like so many other places on a Friday night. There are plenty of cosy seats tucked away which would afford ample privacy if Draco fancies talking about magic without getting locked up somewhere, not that he particularly wants to swap war stories with Potter. He has a feeling neither of them have particularly happy tales to tell.

“Drink?”

“My round, remember?” Potter points to an unoccupied seat. “You grab the table and I’ll get these. Beer?”

Draco shakes his head. “Gin and tonic.”

Potter pulls a face as if the thought of gin and tonic is decidedly unappealing. Draco decides not to share the fact he thinks that ale tastes like old socks.

“Do you want any crisps?”

“Pork scratchings and a pint? You’re really pulling out all the stops.” Draco rolls his eyes. “I’m fine. I ate before I came out. I had a suspicion you might try to feed me something horrible although I expected a bowl of chips at least.”

“Sorry.” Potter has the decency to look sheepish. His eyes shine and he leans in, his breath warm on Draco’s cheek. “There’s this chocolate thing they do that’s really good. Do you want to share that?”

Draco’s mouth waters because he’s not the kind of man to turn down chocolate when it’s on offer and he bites back the desire to tell Potter that sharing chocolate cake at a small table for two is a rather intimate thing to do. It's precisely the kind of trick Draco pulls when he wants to get laid. “We might as well.”

“It’s settled, then.” Potter looks pleased with himself. “I’ll just be a minute.”

“Take your time,” Draco says.

He can’t help but wonder, not for the first time, what the bloody hell he’s doing with his life.

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Potter returns with two spoons, a handful of napkins and their drinks. Each item is precariously balanced and he puts the drink next to Draco before slipping into the seat beside him. He tips his glass in Draco’s direction.

“Well, cheers then. Here’s to interhouse relations.”

Draco rolls his eyes and takes an experimental sip of his gin. It’s crisp and cool, made with cucumbers rather than lime. It seems this Muggle bar of Potter’s knows something about mixing drinks, despite appearances to the contrary.

“What exactly do you think hiding away together in a Muggle bar’s going to accomplish?”

Potter’s brow furrows. “I’m not sure, but it can’t hurt.” He stares at his drink instead of at Draco. “I told Hermione we were meeting up. She seemed to think it was a good idea.”

“Really?” Draco can’t keep the note of surprise out of his tone.

“Yeah.” Potter pulls in a breath and then lets it out again with a whoosh. “She's been telling me to see if you wanted a drink for ages. She thinks we might find some common ground.”

“Does she?” Draco’s eyes narrow and he takes in Potter. Granger’s smart, as much as Draco hates to admit it. If anyone would be able to hazard a guess as to the cause of some of Potter’s nervous energy and disillusionment with witches, it would be her. No wonder she’s decided to push Potter in his direction. He wonders what she’d say if she knew the things Draco would agree to do for Potter. It’s not his job to help closeted Gryffindors come out of the closet just so they can bugger off with someone more worthy than Draco. He huffs and takes another sip of his drink, never taking his eyes off Potter.

Potter fiddles with his beer mat. “I’ve been in America. They reckon there might be an increase in Dark wizard activity after the Muggle elections. There’s lots of unrest at the moment. We’re working with the Ministry there to keep an eye on things.”

Draco contemplates Potter. “Is that what this is about?” Potter knows Draco spends time in America. He knows because Draco made sure everyone within earshot heard all about his summer holidays in New York hotels and sunning himself on Miami’s beaches. He frowns and mutters something rude about Potter and his assumptions under his breath. Draco goes to America because Malfoys can still be anonymous over there, not because he’s trying to hang out with the all-American Death Eaters, whoever the hell they are.

“What what’s about?” Potter looks momentarily confused.

“The drinks. Playing nice all of a sudden. I suppose you want to know if I’ve got any connections in America that might be helpful to your latest noble cause?”

Potter snorts with laughter. “Give over, Malfoy. I’m making conversation, not interrogating you. I’m not in the habit of inviting suspects to the pub for a beer and chocolate cake, you idiot.”

Draco huffs because he doesn’t appreciate being called an idiot. “Well for the record, I don’t know what you’re talking about.” It’s not strictly true. Draco knows just enough to make sure he avoids the wrong people these days. He refuses to see the work he’s put into establishing himself as a worthy member of society unravel because of poor associations.

Potter rolls his eyes. “This isn’t an interview. Don’t be soft. What do you think of it?”

“America?” Draco relaxes a little, but he refuses to let his guard down completely. Potter is an Auror, after all. It can be easy to forget when he’s stretched out in a comfortable pub booth in his Fleetwood Mac t-shirt and flashing that disarming smile. “I go there on holiday, so obviously I like it. I’ve got friends there.”

“From school?” Potter wrinkles his nose, clearly trying to remember who left for where after the war. There was a mass exodus of people who needed a change of scenery. Slytherins, mainly. People like Draco who found the idea of begging for scraps from the Ministry distinctly unappealing. Draco’s one of the few idiots who decided to give two fingers to the *Prophet* and flaunt his expensive shirts and too-tight trousers all over the papers. It’s a big fuck you to the people who’ll hate Draco even if he’s photographed with abandoned kneazles and donating big cheques to the Janus Thickey ward. He prefers to do that stuff privately. Not kneazles, obviously. Draco couldn’t give a fuck about the kneazles. His donation to Janus Thickey was anonymous, if not entirely altruistic. There was a year he disappeared after the war. The benefit to having lots of money is a private room and the ability to keep the press at bay. Draco’s lips tighten at the memory. White walls. White uniforms. Everything so clinical, his mind ruptured and fragmented by the memories of war.

Draco realises Potter’s looking for an answer, his expression quizzical. “One or two but it’s Muggles, mainly.” Draco can’t quite keep the bitterness out of his voice as his lips twist into a smile. “People who know nothing about my past. It’s refreshing.”

“I bet,” Potter mutters. He seems to want to ask something else, but they’re interrupted by the arrival of a decadent looking chocolate fondant. Potter gives Draco a quick grin and then tucks in, letting out a sinful groan as the warm chocolate cake touches his lips.

“Well, if it’s *that* good.” Draco tries not to think about the way Potter’s chocolate appreciation face looks similar to his orgasm face and he digs his spoon into the other side of the cake. Potter’s right. It’s *good*. Hot and rich, without being overly sweet. Draco’s ideal kind of desert. There’s something almost romantic about eating chocolate cake with Potter, watching one another with daft smiles and

humming about the delicious taste. It's all Draco can do to stop himself from reaching out and twining his fingers with Potter's just to see what happens.

"What do you reckon?" Potter wipes his mouth with a napkin when he's finished. He looks flushed and happy, as if a bit of chocolate can make everything okay in the world.

"Good choice, Potter." Draco finishes his drink and stands, nodding towards the bar. "Another?"

"Why not? It's Friday and I don't have anywhere else to be."

"Maybe I'll take you clubbing later," Draco says. A terrible, dangerous idea occurs to him as he flicks his eyes over Potter and wonders how he might look hot and flushed from dancing. "If you're lucky."

"Oh?" Potter looks almost intrigued. "I don't do that much."

"First time for everything," Draco replies and tries to ignore how much those words sting.

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Potter's not drunk, but he's more relaxed after a couple of pints. He's just the right side of tipsy, talking enthusiastically about America and passing comment on one of the cases he's been assigned to that's found its way onto Draco's desk. The small pub is a little busier now and there's a low hum of conversation. Draco and Potter squeeze close to one another on the seat as another couple ask if they can share the space.

Draco looks at Potter and then at the couple who are openly affectionate with one another, pausing between moments of laughter to kiss or squeeze their hands together. It's nauseating but it's not just the public display of affection that makes Draco uncomfortable. It's more the way Potter's gaze starts to linger on Draco's lips for a little too long and the way their legs press together under the table from ankle to thigh. If this was a date, Draco would be running his fingers over the thick denim of Potter's jeans under the table about now. But it isn't a date, whatever Draco's pounding heart and Potter's heavy-lidded gaze seem to suggest. The thing is, it's different being gay. Everyone seems to assume you're straight until proven otherwise. There are still people who won't just come out and say it, even if the world has moved on. Draco's had to get used to working out whether polite conversations are simply that or hints that something more might be on offer. He's become particularly astute at reading same-sex desire and the moment where friendship or casual conversations spills into flirting territory, with an undercurrent of tension and lots of unsubtle body language. Potter's *definitely* the latter, even if he doesn't seem to realise it yet. Draco swallows and shakes his head to try to clear his thoughts, unable to believe he hasn't seen through the cause of Potter's nervous energy before. He's a mass of complications and Draco just wants to take him home and do all kinds of filthy things to him.

"Come on." Draco reaches around Potter and grabs his jacket, slinging it over his shoulder. "Come dancing with me."

"I'm a horrible dancer. Two left feet." Potter stands anyway, flashing Draco a lazy smile. He throws his own jacket on and follows Draco outside, looking up at the sky. "Nice evening for it."

"Summer's on the way." Draco takes a cigarette packet out of his pocket and lights one, looking up. "You never see stars in London. Too many clouds. Too much smog."

“Yeah.” Potter starts to walk, falling into step next to Draco. “Where are we going, then? Somewhere posh?”

“Not exactly.” Draco gives him a smirk. “Scared, Potter?”

Potter laughs low in his throat. He gives Draco a side-long glance and shrugs. He carries on walking and changes the subject to something work related.

It doesn’t escape Draco’s attention that Potter didn’t answer the question.

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Draco remembers his first time in a Muggle gay bar with perfect clarity. He’d turned up dressed to the nines, expecting drag queens on the DJ decks and go-go dancers gyrating in skimpy underwear. Instead he found himself in a pub with a rainbow flag above the door, heaving with wall to wall men of all different ages, shapes and sizes. He found the places with the glitter balls soon enough, and danced until they booted him out and he grabbed a cab to a club playing loud techno music under a bridge somewhere. He found the bars which attracted the student crowds, the hipster haunts and the places with large video screens playing Muggle pop crammed to the rafters with people of all ages and genders dancing until the early hours. He spent a couple of years investigating Muggle London and now he’s pretty au fait with most of it. He knows where the last few remaining saunas are and he’s not ashamed to admit he’s been to one or two parties in places which would probably make Potter blush.

In the end, Draco decides to go for the kind of place where semi-naked dancers writhe on a sticky surfaced bar under the light of a disco ball. He wants the sort of club that’s packed on a Friday night, largely because he wants to feel Potter pressed against him at the bar. He wants a bar with rainbow flags above the door, frequented by the odd drag queen and well-oiled men serving sickly sweet shots. He doesn’t want subtle, because he wants Potter to know exactly what kind of bar they’re in from the moment they step through the door. He could easily have suggested one of the sleepy, gay-friendly late night bars Draco frequents for a cocktail or he could have taken Potter somewhere with lots of leather and exposed flesh. It’s not what he wants, though. He wants something light-hearted and unapologetically camp. He wants to watch Potter take in the crowds of relaxed people, dancing to upbeat music and having the time of their lives. Part of Draco can’t help but wonder if it might show Potter new possibilities. The possibility of being free. Besides, even if he still wants to play the heterosexual game, Potter needs a bit of *fun*. The kind of fun that comes from laughing until your sides hurt and drinking sticky shots of something vile before stumbling home, singing at the stars. Draco could use a bit of that himself. Laughter doesn’t come easily these days but there’s something about the way Potter grins and lounges about with ease that makes Draco smile. Properly smile. The kind that starts from the heart and worms its way up to his lips. Damn Potter for that.

Draco gives Potter a quick look when they arrive. He’s wide-eyed and taking in the people milling outside for a smoke or piling out to take the party somewhere else. “It’s a gay bar, Potter. I assume you don’t have a problem with that?” He leans close enough that his breath must land on Potter’s cheek because it makes him shiver. “Don’t worry, not everybody here likes cock. You should be safe enough.”

Potter colours and he shakes his head quickly. “Yeah, of course. No problem.”

“Well, then. Welcome to *my* idea of a good night in Muggle London. I have to say, I quite liked your pub and chocolate cake idea as a way to get the evening going.”

“Glad you liked it.” Potter seems to steel himself a little, flexing his hands and then flashing Draco a smile which isn’t quite as confident as his usual wide grin. They make their way inside and Draco reaches for Potter’s hand largely so they can keep together but partially because spending the night shoved next to Potter in a tiny booth has made him desperate for some kind of skin on skin contact. Their fingers slide together and Potter squeezes Draco’s hand lightly, clearly not in any rush to let go as they make their way through the packed dance floor to a quieter part of the bar. Draco wonders how he’s going to play this and if, at any point, he’s going to tell Potter about their night together. He decides to keep quiet for the time being and he grabs a couple of drinks before leading them to a spare seat. They’re lucky. There’s hardly any seating space and most of the corners are full of people kissing in the shadows or large groups of people laughing loudly and taking shots.

“You’ve been clubbing before, I hope.” Draco leans closer to Potter, partly because it's an excuse to get nearer and partly to make himself heard over the music.

“Not like this.” Potter lets out a rough laugh, his eyes taking in everything. Draco can’t help but bristle when Potter’s gaze sweeps over the topless man serving shots on a tray. He does look good, but Draco’s *right there*. There’s no need for Potter to make his ogling quite so obvious.

“I can tell.” Draco nudges Potter and he laughs under his breath. “I thought we were here to help me pull, not you.”

Potter looks at Draco with a frown and he arches an eyebrow. “Is that why we’re here? I thought you wanted to show me a good night. Can’t do that if you’re off snogging some bloke selling vodka for three quid.” There’s something of a challenge in the way Potter looks at Draco with a mulish tilt to his chin. Draco’s always loved a challenge.

“From the way you were staring at him I’d say he’s more your type than mine, darling.” Draco sighs at Potter’s pink cheeks, wild eyes and disgruntled look. “Oh, *relax*. Let’s make a pact.” He extends his hand which Potter eyes warily. “I won’t pull tonight if you don’t.”

Potter looks as if he’s about to protest, but then he shrugs and takes Draco’s hand. He gives it a firm shake, a smile playing over his lips as he watches Draco. “Fancy one of those shots, then?”

Draco’s not sure he wants to allow Potter to go up to half-naked Muggle who looks as if he’s been modelling himself on some kind of Rodin sculpture. Not to mention he can see the thirsty looks some of the Muggles are giving Potter, even with Draco right there. He just seems to exude this quiet confidence and he’s handsome in a *couldn’t care less* scruffy sort of way. It’s a heady combination.

“Might as well.” He catches Potter’s hand as he stands, not failing to notice the way Potter’s gaze lingers on their fingers clutched together. “Do try not to break our pact so soon after making it.”

Potter shakes his head with a huff of laughter as if the very notion is ridiculous and makes his way to the bar, oblivious to the eyes that follow him.

Draco drops his head onto the table with a groan. He’s definitely not going to be okay after this. He’s fairly certain of that.

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After a conversation with far too many laughs and one touch of Potter’s shoulder too many, he comes back with their shots unscathed. Draco can’t help but notice how people watch Potter when

he moves with ease through the bar. He can't help but watch Potter himself – the broad grin and murmured apologies as he knocks into someone and the way his easy laugh carries over the music. Potter seems relaxed, but Draco knows enough of him by now to pick up on the wired, slightly skittish way he holds himself and the slightly lost look as he rubs the light scruff on his chin with the back of his hand. The thing that pleases Draco most of all is when Potter seems at his most uncertain he casts a look at Draco who gives him a nod. It seems to relax Potter, the tension seeping from his shoulders and he quickly continues through the crowd before slipping into his seat with a huff of laughter.

"I thought I'd get us two, save getting up again. Bottoms up."

"Interesting choice of phrase in a gay bar." Draco can't help but wink at Potter as he takes a shot and clinks the glass against Potter's.

"Is it?" Potter flushes again in that charming way of his and Draco's done for. He wants to take Potter slowly and this time he wants him to remember every goddamn minute. They drink their shots and then move back to the more palatable sweet cocktails Draco ordered. It's not long before Potter's attention shifts from Draco to two men kissing on the sofa next to them. He licks his lips and his eyes darken. Draco rolls his eyes, because he's damned if he's going to tiptoe around this any longer.

"When did you work it out?"

"What?" Potter looks at Draco, jolted out of his reverie.

"That you're gay." Draco gives Potter a steady look, noticing he's already shifting nervously. "You *are* gay, aren't you?"

"No, I don't think…" Potter looks a bit desperate again and Draco's reminded of the moment sipping wine with Potter and watching the way he looked like he wanted to crawl out of his skin.

"Why can't you say it?" Draco stares at Potter whose eyes suddenly narrow.

"What do you mean *why can't I say it*? Have we had a conversation like this before?"

The drinks have made Draco less guarded than usual and he's tired of pretending he doesn't know Potter's dirty little secret. "You did a bit more than that."

"You're not making sense." Potter tugs at his hair and he gives Draco a look that's half confusion, half anger. "I wasn't that pissed."

"No, but you did ask me to make you come and then Obliviate you." Draco takes a sip of his drink. "Charmed, I'm sure."

Potter swallows and Draco tries to keep his face implacable. Potter grabs his jacket and stands so quickly he nearly knocks the drinks over.

"Potter, wait!"

But Harry's out of the club in a flash and he doesn't look back at Draco once.

*

Draco finds him, eventually, on a bench looking up at the sky. The park is quiet and there's the sound of a few revelers and the distant thud of music from the nearby pubs and clubs but Potter's managed to find one blissfully quiet spot in the whole of London.

"Smoke?"

"I don't…" Potter sighs and then he shrugs. "Fuck it, might as well."

Draco lets Potter lean in to light his cigarette and he takes one himself, leaning back on the bench and watching the few stars that flicker and fade behind the clouds.

"Look at that. There are stars, after all."

"One or two." Potter's voice is gruff and he shifts next to Draco. "Why didn't you tell me?"

Draco shrugs. "You asked me not to. It wasn't my idea. Well, it was a bit. But you said yes. You wanted it. All of it. The fucking and the Obliviating."

"Fucking?" Potter's voice sounds a little wobbly round the edges.

"Wanking. Whatever. We snogged for a bit then gave each other hand jobs. Then I wiped your memory, we drank a bottle of wine between us and you left. For what it's worth, you seemed like you enjoyed it."

Potter snorts softly. He shifts again. "Yeah. I bet."

"I thought it was me, at first." Draco's still not sure it isn't and the admission leaves his heart beating in his chest as the air fills with the quiet sound of their breathing. "Me that you wanted to forget."

"No, it wasn't you." Potter doesn't expand on that, but he doesn't have to. Somehow, Draco believes him. "I didn't think I'd done anything with a bloke before. I don't remember any of it."

"Do you think there are others?" The thought hadn't occurred to Draco before and it washes over him now in an icy wave. The idea that he's just another one of many to Potter doesn't sit well. It sets off something fierce and protective which roars in his chest.

"No." Potter's quiet, but he sounds certain. Draco glances at him.

"Would you even know?"

Potter shrugs and meets Draco's eyes. His eyes are red-rimmed and *god* he's been crying again. Draco's heart clenches and he moves closer to him on the bench. It's a cold night, after all.

"I think I'd know. I knew there was something off about that night. I wanted to see you again to fill in the gaps. I've never had that before. Besides, I don't know if there's anyone else I would have trusted."

Potter's words send Draco's stomach swooping restlessly.

"Why the hell would you trust me?" Draco lights another cigarette, offering one to Potter who shakes his head.

“I don’t know. I thought you might understand. I came back again, didn't I?" Harry puts his head in his hands and Draco notices the way his shoulders shake and he breathes in urgent gulps of air. Draco runs his hand over Harry's back, his own throat constricting. They sit there for a while, ignoring the way that Harry's sobs heave through his body. Draco moves his hand from Harry's back to his hair, toying with the messy strands until Harry can breathe more easily again and the wretched sounds subside.

"You came back to me." Draco lets out a broken laugh when the silence needs breaking. "You bloody idiot."

Harry looks up, his eyes damp and his cheeks red. He rubs his eyes vigorously, clutching his glasses in his free hand. He blinks at Draco, as if he's fuzzy around the edges. He looks wrecked and Draco can't help but lean in and brush their lips together for a brief moment. Harry puts his fingers to his mouth, his hand half inside the baggy woolen sleeve for comfort. "I'm sorry. I don't know what I'm doing.”

“Clearly.” Draco stands and he puts his hands in his pockets, looking at a group of people spilling into the small park from a nearby club. “I’m going home.”

“Okay.” Harry sounds small and lost. It doesn’t suit him.

Draco turns to face him. “That's an invitation, by the way. Are you coming?”

A flicker of surprise crosses Potter’s face and then he takes a deep breath. He nods, standing and falling into step beside Draco as the silence stretches between them.

*

Draco makes them both a coffee as soon as they get in, despite the fact it’s past midnight and coffee is, like Potter, a terrible idea. He adds two spoons of sugar to Potter’s as requested and tries valiantly not to make a sniffy comment. They sit at the kitchen table this time because it’s easier for Draco to put a decent block of wood between he and Potter. The sofa is too cosy, too inviting and it holds too many memories of what went before.

Draco blows on his coffee, trying not to find the way Potter’s glasses steam up endearing. He waits until the coffee is cool enough to drink properly before speaking.

“You didn’t tell me you were gay that night. It’s just like tonight. I had to come out to my father, I know it's not always easy to say but you can't even seem to say it to yourself, or to me for that matter.”

Potter frowns at his mug and he shakes his head. “I don’t know. If I try to say it, it’s like the words get stuck. It makes me think of being a kid and the stuff my uncle would say.”

“Oh.” Draco doesn’t know much about Potter’s past but he knows that the Muggles aren’t involved in Potter’s life these days, so he can’t imagine the revelation of wizarding heritage went brilliantly. “Let me guess, your uncle thinks it’s an abomination? I expect he threw around words like sissy and faggot.”

Potter looks up, his expression sombre. “Sometimes. He always said nobody likes people that are different.” He twists his hands together. “People were dying because of it. Muggles, I mean. I just

remember him saying they probably deserved it, because of their homosexual lifestyle. He said I'd end up just like them one day and he was right."

Draco's stomach clenches. He might have spent all of his own childhood ignoring the plights of Muggles but he's learned a lot more since from his friends in America. He knows a bit about the history, the riots and the marches. He knows sexuality wasn't a pre-requisite for a disease that didn't discriminate. "Moral panic, Potter. It's the kind of thing you fight against in our world with those causes of yours. You wouldn't believe my father giving you a history on blood politics, would you? Read some books about it. I've got a few from a friend in America. You should borrow them. I'd wager they're a little more illuminating than your uncle's perspective. You'll probably find them inspiring, knowing you."

Potter shrugs, looking pained. "I thought my uncle thought I was strange because of my magic and magic's *brilliant* so I know he's wrong about that. But then I started to realise I'm different here too, even in this world. No one seemed to feel the same way as me at Hogwarts and I just wanted him to be wrong about that too but I don't think he was, it must be how everyone thinks. I just want to be normal."

"Don't we all," Draco mutters. He feels like he should say something about there being no such thing as normal or tell Potter he's universally adored because he *isn't* normal. Whatever that even means. "My father doesn't approve."

"No?" Potter looks at Draco and his voice shakes. "I don't think I'm strong enough to make a new life all over again. Not after everything. My friends are the most important things I have."

Draco raises his eyebrows at Potter. It strikes far later than it probably should have done that Potter has no real frame of reference for this, other than his Muggle upbringing and the hate-filled Howlers and salacious gossip columns he knows Draco's privy to. Potter knows what it means to be gay from guardians who obviously embodied the worst kind of Muggle narrow mindedness and homophobia of the eighties and nineties. He knows hatred, anger and violence. He doesn't know Pansy's had a girlfriend for three years because Pansy lives in Boston now Most people are more adept at keeping their personal lives out of the papers than Draco, but then most people aren't trying to say a very loud, very public *fuck you* to their fathers. Potter probably doesn't know about the wizards who liked to sneak off for snogs with Draco during Hogwarts because Potter wouldn't have known where to start in those days. It seems he barely knows where to start now.

"Is that what you think? It's all hell fire and brimstone? People were getting up to all sorts at school, they still are. I'll give you a list if you want. As far as I know, most are out now and living perfectly happily. You just found yourself a very straight group, it seems. Although Finnegan will kiss man, woman or hippogriff after a few."

Potter laughs. "Shut it, he's a friend."

"I wasn't criticising, I was applauding him." Draco notices the way Potter's eyebrows knit together again. "What did you think of the club?"

Potter shrugs. "I don't know what I think. I didn't expect it to be like that tonight. That place you pick up people with your posh champagne wasn't exactly oiled torsos and wizards snogging."

Draco shrugs. "I suppose not. There aren't many places like the club we went to tonight for wizards and witches. That doesn't mean much, though. We only have a fraction of the number of pubs and bars in the first place."

Potter looks torn. “It seemed easier. Everyone looked happy.”

Draco rolls his eyes. “Everyone was pissed. It’s not difficult to be happy in a place with glitter balls and cheesy Muggle pop music. That’s just one bar in the middle of a capital city. It’s not as easy everywhere. Not as happy for everyone. Your uncle probably made that much clear. It’s better though. Here, at least. America, too. There’s been a lot of progress since then and even back in the eighties and nineties those bars were around, full of people dancing just like tonight. I won't say there's nothing to be scared of because that's not quite right, it depends who your audience is. But put it this way, you're as likely to encounter homophobia as people who think the Dark Lord should have beaten you and it's often the same people, so you're screwed anyway if you bump into them on a dark night.”

Harry gives Draco a look, his confidence pulsing off him in waves and a decided shift in his demeanor. "You think I can't fight, Malfoy?"

Draco holds up his hands lest Potter challenges him to a duel. "Yes, you're a very strong Auror. Congratulations. I would give you a medal but I believe you already have several."

"Piss off," Harry says, but he's smiling. He looks up at Draco eventually. "I think part of me has always known."

"Known what?" Draco holds Harry's gaze, watching as the flush rises in his cheeks.

"That I'm...gay." The word is followed by an exhale and Potter looks slightly startled.

Draco hums and takes a sip of his coffee. "It feels good, doesn't it? To say it out loud.

"Yeah." Harry nods, a smile playing over his lips. "When did you know?"

“About me?” Draco turns his eyes to the ceiling, letting out his breath between his teeth. “I’ve always known, too. I experimented at Hogwarts but it was never a realistic option to be out and proud given my father's views so I made a fairly unsatisfactory attempt at being with witches for a while but it never stuck. I knew why and I think they did, too. I just wasn’t ready to say as much. I had some…problems after the war. I took some time to myself. Worked things out. Everything was a bit messed up in here.” Draco taps his fingers to his forehead. “Working out I was gay turned out to be easier than the other things in my head at the time. I had a thing with Charlie Weasley when I got out. It made sense and I haven’t looked back.”

“Wait. *What*?” Harry looks askance, staring at Draco. “But you…Ron…”

Draco waves his hand. “I don’t think Weasley – your Weasley I mean – knew about it. Because it was me. I don’t think Charlie hides it otherwise though, he’s just not that interested in more than a bit of fun. All about the dragons, Charlie is. We write sometimes, when the papers are shit.”

Harry looks as if he doesn’t know what to do with himself, leaning forward as if he wants to get all the information he can. “Is that true?”

“No, Potter.” Draco rolls his eyes. “I’m lying to you because I’m hoping you’ll want to fuck and then ask to be Obliviated. Let’s not do that again, by the way. It really didn’t feel good.”

“I’m sorry.” Potter has the decency to look chagrined. “I don’t know why I thought that would be a good idea.”

“Because you didn’t want to face up to it, perhaps.” Draco shrugs. “Anyway, I’m fairly certain Charlie’s not hiding anything. Which means your extended family probably couldn’t care less if you’re gay, bi or whatever the hell you are. Not to mention I’m pretty sure Granger’s already got an inkling if she’s pushing you in my direction.”

Harry rakes a hand through his hair, shaking his head. “You probably think I’m stupid.”

“No.” Draco shakes his head. “I think you were raised to believe something and nobody was around to show you an alternative. Funnily enough, I’m familiar with the concept.”

“So people really *don’t care*?” Potter looks at Draco and he’s got that look he sometimes has when he’s thinking about Auror strategy. The thing is, Potter isn’t stupid at all, Draco wasn’t trying to make him feel better. He knows exactly how to read a person and how to listen out for lies. He’s good at instinct and intuition – he doesn’t blindly believe what he’s told. This isn’t the time for lies.

“I didn’t say that, either.” Draco finishes his coffee and calls over the brandy with a flick of his hand. He pours them both a measure and sits back in his chair. “Of course people care. You’ve read Skeeter’s articles and you know what they say about me isn’t just because I’m a Malfoy. People are still scared to come out, but it’s the minority that will tell you there’s anything wrong with it. At least it is these days, thank Merlin.”

“I hear him still, sometimes.” Harry looks into the distance, his expression cloudy. “The things he used to say. It’s always made me feel ashamed.”

Draco studies him. “People will still try to make you feel shit. You know that?”

Potter nods. “Yeah. I’m starting to get that.”

Draco resists the urge to reach for Harry, who drums his fingers on the table as he thinks. “Honestly, I’m just surprised you care.”

“Why?” Potter’s brow furrows and the incessant drumming stops.

Draco shrugs. “Because when have you ever cared what people think about you? You’ve always been a big defender of Muggle-borns and house-elves. You even tried to get *my* sentence reduced, the poor Death Eater, ostracised by society.” Draco winces. Potter’s role in his freedom to live outside Azkaban still smarts. “At least I deserved to be marginalised. You’re far too noble for your own good, Potter.”

“Not half as noble as people seem to think.” Harry rakes a hand through his hair, his eyes shadowed and his face wan. Draco wonders what he hears when he closes his eyes at night and why his smile still doesn’t touch his eyes.

“Better than most.” Draco says.

“Really?” Harry’s voice is barely a whisper. “And if I said I still wanted to be Obliviated, even after this?”

Draco’s heart clenches in his chest and he fingers his wand without looking up.

“I’d do it. If you think it might help.” The *if you needed it* sits unspoken between them. Draco can feel the damned heat of embarrassment creeping up his neck to settle in his cheeks. Over the course

of the night Potter's started to become Harry and Draco's definitely got himself in the worst kind of mess. He hates being out of control. He finally looks up to meet Harry's eyes.

Harry watches the way Draco slides his wand through his fingers and then huffs out a breath, shaking his head.

"Why?"

Draco frowns. "Why what?"

"Why would you agree to that?" Harry looks confused, but his gaze is sharp and searching. Draco can't help but flush deeper beneath the intensity of it.

"Because it's a Friday night and you dragged me home early. I might as well get a decent shag out of it."

"I see." Now it's Potter's turn to arch his eyebrows at Draco. "Sounds about right."

"Glad you think so." Draco clears his throat, knowing full well Harry doesn't believe him for a moment. "Is that what you want?"

"No. Not yet."

"Then what?"

"Can we go and sit on the sofa?" Potter shifts in his seat, nodding towards the living room. Of course, he remembers being in Draco's home even if he doesn't remember what happened.

"We can." Draco pockets his wand and stands, looking at Harry. "That was where…well, you know. The last time."

"Oh." Harry looks a bit startled. He stands and puts his hands in his pocket. "I…want you to tell me about it. Properly."

Draco winces. He's never been good at talking dirty. "Now?"

Harry shakes his head, a small smile playing on his lips. "Not just yet. Later."

"Oh," Draco says.

It's the promise of *later* and the way Harry smiles that sends a warm flush of pleasure through Draco's body. No, Harry definitely isn't the idiot. If tonight's anything to go by, that's all Draco.

Say You'll Remember Me

I said no one has to know what we do, his hands are in my hair, his clothes are in my room. His voice is a familiar sound nothing lasts forever, but this is getting good now

Say you'll remember me....staring at the sunset, red lips and rosy cheeks, say you'll see me again even if it's just in your wildest dreams...even if it's just pretend

"Got out from where?"

Draco decides to leave the brandy alone thinking a half pissed Potter probably isn't a good idea. Instead they settle with another coffee, sitting a little apart on the sofa. He can sense Harry looking at him and he turns to face him.

"What?"

"You and Charlie. You said something about it happening when you got out."

"Ah." Draco puts down his coffee and he scratches idly at his arm. "Janus Thickey."

"Draco…" Harry's voice catches on the syllables and Draco turns to him with a frown.

"Don't do that, Potter. Don't fucking pity me. I didn't ask for it and I don't fucking need it."

Harry holds up his hands and he keeps his expression smooth and serious. "No pity. That wasn't *pity*. It was…I don't know…surprise?"

"Because I seem so together?" Draco rolls his eyes. "Come on."

"I just didn't know. How long for?"

"A year, give or take." Draco pulls off his jumper and then rolls up the sleeve of his shirt. He tips his forearm towards Harry, showing him the marks on his arm where the Dark Mark is covered with mottled skin and the jagged lines of age-old etchings in the flesh. "There was this, for a start. You might as well see it. If anything happens you will anyway and if last time's anything to go by you're probably going to want to start crying or have some kind of deep discussion about it and I don't want to do that. Not when I'm trying to get off. It spoils the mood."

Harry brushes his fingers over the scars and then he looks up at Draco. "Crying? What the fuck do you mean *crying*?"

"After." Draco rolls his shirt sleeve down again and pulls his arm away from Potter. It doesn't help to look at reminders of his past for too long. That's probably why it sometimes hurts so much to look at Potter straight on. "Afterwards."

"Right." Harry's eyebrows knit and he looks at the coffee in his hands. "Well. Sorry about that."

“Doesn’t matter.” Draco pauses. “Do you want to know yet?”

Harry holds up his mug of coffee, flashing Draco a small smile that doesn’t quite meet his eyes. “Later.”

“Fine.”

Harry stares back into his mug again and when he speaks his voice is low. “Are you interested in Charlie?”

“Define interested.” Draco watches Harry closely trying to work out what’s going on in his mind. “I wouldn’t say no to a tumble if he was back in the country for long enough and wanted to meet up. Why?”

“I don’t know.” Harry does a strange half shrug and he looks gloomy.

“Do you want him all for yourself, Potter?” Draco tries not to bristle.

Potter looks up, meeting Draco’s gaze head on. “Not him, no.”

Draco’s heart quickens and he clears his throat. Damn Harry. “It’s a bit too soon for declaring your undying, don’t you think?”

“I don’t know how to do any of this.” Harry puts his mug down and shifts a little so he’s facing Draco, his arm stretched across the back of the sofa. “I don’t know how to do any of this with you.”

“Sex?” Draco raises an eyebrow at Harry. “I can probably walk you through the basics if you like.” He makes it sound oh so casual, but the way Harry’s lips twitch at the corner makes him think he hasn’t quite succeeded. Truthfully the idea of showing Harry the kind of long, sweaty first time he won’t forget about in a hurry makes Draco’s heart race.

“That’s very kind of you, Malfoy. Thanks.” Harry’s definitely smiling now, his voice low and teasing. It does funny things to Draco’s insides and he has to try to bite back a smile of his own.

“I’m a delight,” Draco agrees. He really does smile now, the kind of smile he can’t snatch back.

“Yeah.” Harry drinks his coffee and gives Draco a look out of the corner of his eye. “I mean I don't know how to do any of this. Sex is just a small part of it.”

“You’ve been with witches before. You know how *that* works.”

“Do I?” Harry makes his hair even messier, raking a hand through it. “I don’t know much, honestly.”

Draco narrows his eyes. “You had sex, though? Had a pretty witch on her knees for you?”

“Christ, Malfoy.” Harry winces and he shakes his head, glaring at Draco. “I told you, I'm not talking about sex and no, that never happened actually.” A cloud crosses his features. “Is it a problem?”

It’s so far from being a problem that Draco doesn’t know where to begin. It might all be a bit obvious if he lets Harry know how the thought Draco gets to show him all kinds of new things gets him going. “Not a problem. Definitely not a problem.”

“Good.” Harry huffs out a sigh. “But the other stuff. I don’t know how to do that. How to play those games people talk about. Be unavailable to make yourself more desirable, how to just *date*.” Harry shrugs, giving Draco a small smile. “It’s new.”

“Because I’m a man?”

Harry shakes his head and his cheeks flush. “I never really did that with witches either. Ginny was more like a sister, we went to Quidditch matches together and big family events. We didn't get dressed up and go out for a posh bottle of something together on a Saturday night. Since her, you’re the only person I’ve wanted to snog in a very long time. I told you, I don’t really do any of this.”

“I see.” Draco rakes his eyes over Harry, giving him a smirk. “You want to snog me?”

“You’re infuriating,” Harry mutters. “So I also want to punch you, sometimes.”

“Kinky,” Draco replies. He smiles again, one of the traitorous ones that probably gives away far too much. He wonders what he looks like through Harry’s eyes, because he definitely seems more interested as he shifts closer to Draco and his eyes darken a little.

“Tell me, then.” Harry’s voice is low and soft, a flicker of uncertainty crossing his face. “Tell me how it was.”

Draco studies Harry closely. “Will you want to be Oblivated after this again?”

“No.” Harry shakes his head. “I’ve obviously got some stuff to work through but…no.”

“Okay.” Draco takes a breath. He’s not quite sure how to recount the events of the previous week without making it sound crude or without sounding like a simpering idiot. He’s not sure if he’s expected to start waxing lyrical about Harry’s ridiculous eyes or the way his face looks when he’s flushed and close to coming. Draco pulls a face and decides he should probably just keep it short. “We agreed to come back here after you met me for a drink. We opened a bottle of wine and then you kissed me.”

“Oh.” Harry looks rather proud of himself. “*I* kissed *you*?”

“Yes, charged in like a bull in a china shop.” Harry’s closer now, close enough that Draco can feel the huff of laughter which leaves his lips.

“I’d expect nothing less. Gryffindor, you see.” Harry’s even closer still, his lips close to Draco’s and his breath warm. “Maybe I could try…less bullish.” He closes the distance between them and Draco can’t help but groan softly into the kiss. It’s just so *good* being this close to Harry. After a whole night of back and forth and just watching Harry, Draco’s almost aching with the need to kiss him. He opens his mouth to the kiss, tangling his hands in Harry’s hair and pulling him deeper into it. If this is their first kiss – which it might as well be from Harry’s point of view – he should make it a good one. The kiss gets a bit overheated and Harry pulls back after another delicious moment, his cheeks flushed.

“Better?”

Draco gives Harry a look. “I didn’t say it was bad the first time.”

Harry shrugs. “You did a bit.” He licks his lips, his gaze flickering back to Draco’s lips and his heart pounding beneath Draco’s palm – still resting flat against Harry’s chest. “What next?”

“We did that for a while.” Draco shifts on the sofa, kicking off his boots. He moves on to his knees and then he nudges Harry back. “Then you ended up lying down.”

“Like this?” Harry kicks off his own shoes and then stretches out on the sofa, his arm behind his head. He makes space for Draco to kneel between his legs and Draco’s not sure he’s ever seen anything or anyone quite as exquisite. Harry looks a little uncertain, reaching his hand out. “Were you that far away?”

“No.” Draco shifts slowly until he’s over Harry, one hand in Harry’s hair and the other rubbing at the exposed spot of skin by his hip where his t-shirt rucks up. “More like this.”

“*Oh.*” Harry pushes up a little with a low sigh of pleasure. He rocks against Draco just a bit before opening his eyes and biting his bottom lip. “Sorry. Err, what next?”

“I started to do this.” Draco’s voice is huskier than he would like, giving away all of his reckless heart. He runs his knuckles along the thick bulge encased in Harry’s jeans and moves his fingers up to toy with the belt.

“Did I do that too? To you?” Harry’s voice is unsteady and Draco nods, pressing his lips against Harry’s neck.

“Yes, but…wait this time?”

“Okay.” Harry sounds a bit breathless and Draco pulls back so he can watch Harry properly.

“You told me you wanted me to carry on. So I did.” Draco’s voice is rough and low and he slowly slides Harry’s zip open, taking his time with the belt and button on Harry’s jeans. He can feel Harry squirm a little beneath him and he knows from Harry’s ragged breathing how affected he is by Draco’s touch. With slow precision, Draco runs his palm over the bulge in Harry’s pants, making Harry jerk up with a hiss.

“Please…” Harry sounds a little bit desperate and Draco catches his lips in a slow kiss, before pushing his hand inside Harry’s pants. He strokes him so slowly it must be infuriating and Harry bucks into Draco’s fist. “Draco…”

“I made you come like this,” Draco says, which makes Harry groan again. “With my hand. Nice and slow with lots of rough kisses.” Draco’s voice breaks, just a fraction. “It felt good.”

“Did it?” Harry clearly knows it did if the way he pushes up into Draco’s fingers is any indication. “Did I…what did I do?”

“Apart from moan my name?” Draco huffs with fond laughter and runs his lips over Harry’s neck, breathing him in. “You made me come too.”

“Did I?” Harry reaches for Draco’s trousers, his eyes dark and lidded. “Can I do it again?”

Draco shakes his head. “Not yet, I’ve got other plans. Can I suck you?”

Harry lets out an *ngh* sort of sound and pushes into Draco’s fist again. He nods, as if words have escaped him. Draco moves down Harry’s body and helps him out of his jeans and boxers before

running his tongue over Harry's slit. He's salty with pre-come and he's so hard. It's unfair that Potter should have a cock which matches the rest of his gorgeous physique. It's *perfect*. Draco runs his tongue over the tip and along the underside. He wants to make sure he tastes every inch of Potter. He takes his time because he wants Harry to remember this. *Draco* wants to remember this. He wants to remember the way Harry looks stretched out on his small sofa in Diagon Alley, flushed and panting out Draco's name. He can tell Harry's not going to last long and it's all Draco can do not to run his fingers along the crease between Harry's buttocks for fear of making him skittish.

Eventually Harry's low moans become a little louder and Draco's had enough of teasing. He wants to leave Harry boneless and sated so they can go to bed and start all over again. With practiced ease, Draco slides his mouth over Potter and moves down to swallow Harry into the back of his throat. With a sharp cry, Harry jerks up and Draco holds him down on the sofa by pressing on his thighs. Having successfully ensured Harry's going to stay in place, Draco begins his assault. He knows exactly how to use his mouth and tongue in a way which has Harry crying out with pleasure before Draco's even finished. He knows when Harry's close and he reinforces his efforts until Harry trembles and pulses beneath him, coming hard in Draco's mouth.

Feeling rather pleased with himself, Draco pulls off slowly. He wipes the corner of his mouth with his thumb and contemplates Harry, who looks as though he's been shagged into next Sunday.

"Yes?"

Harry nods, his breathing slowly steadying. "*Yes*." His eyes blink open and he watches Draco, his cheeks pink. "Can I give that a go?"

A shiver of pleasure courses through Draco and he nods. "Well, obviously. Come to bed, though?"

Harry nods. "Yeah, okay."

They make their way upstairs with Harry clutching on to Draco's offered hand like it's a lifeline.

It makes Draco feel warm all over.

*

"You should take everything off. It's where we're going to end up anyway." Draco gestures to the bed before pulling off his shirt and slipping out of his own clothes. When he turns, Harry's just watching him. He's still got his trousers on and he's clutching his t-shirt tightly in his fist. He looks both flushed with desire and uncertain, taking in the length of Draco's body.

"You look…"

"Good, hopefully?" Draco moves to Harry and captures his lips in a kiss which becomes distractingly fierce and messy. Eventually he pulls back and he unbuckles Harry's trousers with a deft hand, keeping their eyes together as he catches his breath. "And the rest?"

"Yes. I…yes." Harry shakes his head as if it's too noisy in there and he needs things to quieten down. He pulls off his trousers and pants and even though he's half hard again, Draco doesn't miss the way his hands tremble and his eyes flash with the nervous look from before as if he's going to bolt at any moment.

“I’m going to need you to relax.” Draco runs his hands down Harry’s back and he murmurs into his ear, soft and smoother than he feels. His own hands are shaking because apparently Harry turns him into an inexperienced virgin all over again. “Do you want to wait?”

“No.” Harry sounds certain enough, pressing back into Draco’s hands as they shift over his backside. “*No*, fuck that feels good.”

“This?” Draco finds it difficult to keep the fond amusement out of his voice. At this rate Harry’s going to know all Draco’s secret, messy feelings. “I’m hardly touching you.” He lowers his voice into a whisper and slides a finger lightly over Harry’s hole. “See? Hardly touching you at all.”

“*Fuck*.” Harry’s nearly shaking now, pressed against Draco with his cock now fully hard. He lets out a choked laugh. “Is it supposed to feel like that?”

“I don’t know. How does it feel?” Draco nudges Harry towards the bed, reaching for the lubricant and slicking his fingers before nudging Harry’s legs apart and touching him again with one finger. It makes Harry tremble like he’s about to fall apart.

“Good.” Harry’s voice is choppy and broken and Draco almost forgets the question. He bites back a groan, sliding his finger slowly into Harry and registering the gasp of pleasure and the way Harry opens his legs a little more, pressing back onto Draco’s finger. He mouths over Harry’s hip, avoiding his cock for the moment. He wants to focus on this. The tight, heat of Harry. The way his voice stutters out Draco’s name and the way he’s already perspiring and pressing back into Draco even when he’s only just come. Draco works another finger into Harry when he thinks he’s ready, fingering him open slowly and crooking his fingers. He pushes up on the bed when Harry cries out Draco’s name and captures his lips in a kiss as he fingers Harry firm and hard, crooking his fingers again.

“Okay?” Draco murmurs against Harry’s lips. He doesn’t just want to make it good for Harry because it’s shockingly good for his ego to have Harry Potter come undone under his touch. It’s something else. Something which makes Draco mentally roll his eyes at himself and his own sappiness. He actually wants it to be good for Harry, because the part of him that’s an actual human being feels like Harry might deserve it. The bit of his heart that beats out Harry’s name wants Harry to like it because Draco wants him to come back. Again and again, over and over. Draco wants him in his bed and arching his back, shagged out and needy. Draco wants to make him laugh and make him cry out Draco’s name. He wants it all, so he asks again. “Is it? Is it okay?”

“Yeah.” Harry’s eyes are cloudy with desire and he reaches for Draco, running his hand through Draco’s hair. “Can you…do another?”

“Yes. Yes.” Draco bites back a groan, leaning into Harry’s hand which finds its way to his jaw. He works a third finger into Harry, moaning at the stretch and the heat. He pulls back a little to add more lube until the movement is slick and easy, his fingers moving deep inside Harry and his kisses messy as Harry squirms and pants beneath him.

“I can’t…I’m going to come…I want you to fuck me.”

“Next time. Later. Do it, I want you to.” Draco’s voice is hoarse and urgent as he slides his fingers in and out of Harry, watching as Harry lets go and comes with a broken-off shout. It’s a sight to behold and Draco could almost come just from watching Harry. He lets Harry ride out his orgasm and then slides his fingers from him slowly. With a groan of pleasure, he puts the lube in Harry’s hand and stretches out beside him.

“Do me. Wank me off. Get your hand nice and wet.”

“Okay.” Harry’s voice is hoarse and ragged. He gives Draco a wide grin, his eyes dark and his expression almost surprised. He pours some lube onto his hand and then reaches for Draco with his clean one, pulling him into a deep kiss. Once the angle’s right, Harry seems to quickly get into the task of touching Draco. He kisses him with fervour, sucking Draco’s tongue into his mouth and nibbling his bottom lip. He whispers about the way it felt to have Draco’s fingers inside him and muses what it might be like to feel Draco’s cock inside his body. Really, all signs point to Harry being responsible for Draco’s untimely end. With a low growl of pleasure, Draco finally reaches a powerful climax and pushes into Harry’s eager fist. He knocks Harry’s hand away as his orgasm subsides and he collapses onto his back, sated and relaxed.

“Draco?” After a moment of silence, Harry speaks. His voice is low and tentative.

“Harry?”

“Thanks.”

Draco can’t hide his smile. “You’re welcome. Let me go to sleep for an hour or two. I’m not finished yet.”

“Brilliant.”

Harry sounds as happy as he’s sounded in days, which is why the last thing Draco expects is to wake up in a cold bed with a Harry-shaped dent in the pillow and no sound in the still room.

*

Draco’s not ashamed to admit that his knees nearly buckle with relief when he finds Harry sitting by the fire downstairs, fully clothed and staring into the flames. His cheeks are streaked with tears and his face is flushed from the heat, almost as if he’s been sat there for so long he’s become numb to it. Draco pulls his open shirt close around his chest, glad he at least thought to put on trousers so he doesn’t have to do this – whatever *this* is – naked.

“This feels familiar,” Draco says. He tries not to keep the note of bitterness out of his tone and Harry looks up, startled as if he wasn’t expecting Draco to come and find him.

“Does it?”

“A bit. I know how this goes. Is it Obliviate you’re looking for? Or were you just going to leave through the Floo and hope I’d pretend I’d Obliviated both of us?”

Harry scrubs at his eyes with the back of his hand and he shakes his head. “That’s not what I want.”

“But you don’t want this?” Draco gestures at himself. It’s hard not to feel bitter about it. Hard not to feel as if he wants to throw things, preferably at Potter’s head.

Harry’s cheeks are hot, his hair tousled and he watches Draco with a strange kind of look. “Please. Will you sit with me?”

“Okay,” Draco says. He has a feeling he would rarely deny Harry anything. He lights a cigarette and rests his head in the crook of his arm. His living room smells like Harry. His *skin* smells like

Harry. His head's full of green eyes, wide smiles and bitten-off gasps of pleasure. He's not sure he can go back to a time when those images weren't etched on his brain. "What's this about?"

"I still don't know how to do it," Harry whispers. "I don't know how to be with you." His hands are shaking and he twists them in his lap.

"And you think I know how to be with you?" Draco rolls his eyes. He takes another drag on his cigarette to steady his thoughts. If Potter's going to break up with him before they even start, he deserves the nicotine. The acrid scent of the cigarette clears his head and he takes another slow drag. "I spent my time after the war in the Janus Thickey ward or having meaningless flings with too many strangers to count. What do I know about being in this situation?"

"What situation's that?" Harry gives Draco a look. "I thought this was just a Friday night shag to you, Malfoy."

Draco glares at him. "You did not."

"It's what you said." Harry shrugs.

"Come on. You're not as stupid as I like to pretend you are."

Harry huffs with a soft laugh. "No, maybe not."

"So if anyone leaves tonight…" Draco takes a breath and then he lets the words escape him with a rush. "If anyone's the *coward* here, let's be clear it's not me. I might not know what the fuck I'm doing, but I'd like to try to find out. If you can stop crying after we have sex, that is. It's giving me a complex."

"Fuck you." Despite Harry's words, his voice sounds unbelievably fond and there's an edge of laughter to his response which makes Draco warm.

"Were you going to leave?"

"I thought about it." Harry shrugs. "Then I lit the fire. You can't get very far through a burning Floo. I've been sitting here for ages."

"Why were you going to leave?"

"Because the voices wouldn't stop." Harry puts his head in his hands. "After you fell asleep, I couldn't stop thinking and all I could hear was *him* and then it became other people, people I love."

"Get that seen to, Potter. Trust me." Draco glances at Harry. "Or tell those voices of yours to fuck off. They get a bit quieter after a while, even if they don't disappear completely."

"Do they?" Harry rubs his forehead and he nudges his glasses up on his nose. "It helped, just watching the fire. I thought about stuff. But it's going to be a problem, isn't it? The fact we don't know a thing about one another, not really."

Draco stubs out his cigarette. He can't help the flush of anger at Harry's words, embarrassed, somehow, that Harry might try to leave. He knows he shouldn't be petty because Potter clearly has problems the size of Europe, but Draco's spent most of his teenage years behaving like an insufferable wanker. People can't expect him to forget all of that just because he's an adult.

“Speak for yourself.” Draco knows he sounds brittle and angry, but he also doesn’t deal well with people leaving him alone at night. He never has. He doesn’t like an empty bed or the feeling of darkness which swallows him up when he wakes in a lonely room rich with the scent of a stranger whose name he can’t remember. It reminds him too much of white walls, white uniforms and the scent of something clinical and sharp. He shivers.

“Oh?” Harry’s voice is quiet and Draco doesn’t miss the note of hope.

“There’s no point if that’s how you feel.” Draco closes his eyes and refuses to look at Harry. The thing is, Draco thinks he *does* know Potter. He feels like he’s spent years observing him and taking in the tics of his personality and those grainy pictures in the paper when Potter’s smile refused to sit right. Admitting the time spent watching and observing however, would be admitting far too much.

“I’m a mess,” Harry says, as if that’s news to anyone.

“Do you think that’s an exciting new development?” Draco snorts. “Christ, I’ve known that about you for years. It’s hardly anything *new*. I’m Draco Malfoy, for fuck’s sake. Famously fond of a mirror. I know what false bravado looks like, I see it every day. Your smile doesn't meet your eyes half the time, you're taking breaks from work to 'recuperate' and you seem incapable of letting yourself be happy in your personal life."

“Why didn’t you say anything?” There’s a rustle as Harry turns and Draco can sense he’s being watched.

“We’re not *friends*. What was I supposed to do? Walk up to you during a Monday briefing and say ‘Hello, Potter, you look like shit, perhaps I can help because some days it feels like I’m losing my fucking mind?’” Draco stares at the fire, a roll of anguish settling in his stomach. It’s so pathetic and predictable that Potter would be the one spark of hope in his life and even that’s close to being extinguished in a puff of smoke.

“I feel like that too, sometimes. Like I’m there, but not really. It’s like watching someone else and I’m just going through the motions. It’s why I’m seeing someone. It helps.”

“Of course it does.” Draco breathes out through his teeth, trying not to scratch at his arm. He does so anyway and Harry reaches over to still his hand. He looks at their fingers together, tanned and short and long and thin. He looks ghost like. Skeletal. Like he’s not really there and it’s Potter whose heart beats with hope, Potter who’s healthy and *alive* while Draco just fades away. “At least people want you to work things out. Nobody would care if I just disappeared.”

“I’d care.” Harry’s closer now, his voice rough. “I’d care quite a bit, actually.”

“Why?” Draco refuses to look at Harry. “We’re practically strangers, you said.”

“Strange, maybe.” Harry laughs weakly then he shifts. Potter really *is* strange because before Draco knows it he’s got him curled up against his side, breathing on Draco’s neck and toying with the buttons on his shirt. With a sigh, Draco slips an arm around him and keeps him close. He’s a warm, solid comfort with his messy tufts of hair pressed against Draco’s chest as if all he wants to listen to is the beat of Draco’s heart.

“Speak for yourself.”

“Perhaps you know more about me than I thought.” Harry shrugs and Draco can feel the motion of it. “I’ve become so good at hiding it I thought I was doing quite well. I actually thought it might all be a bit of a surprise and then you wouldn’t want this with me anymore.”

“I don’t think you’re quite as good at hiding as you think you are.” Draco slides his hand into Harry’s hair to play with it. It seems to make Harry relax against him, a soft sound of contentment leaving his lips. “Besides, the things we don't know, we can learn. Did you think we were going to spend all of our time fucking? You really *don’t* know how this works. I’d appreciate a few hours of conversation from time to time, Potter, otherwise you’re going to make me feel cheap.”

Harry laughs, the sound reverberating off Draco’s chest. “As if I could make you feel cheap, you rich twat.”

“Granted, it doesn’t happen often.” Draco’s lips curve into a smile despite himself. “But you can’t make me feel like you’re only in it for my good looks and sexual prowess.”

Harry snorts, stretching out and putting his head in Draco’s lap, looking up at him. His eye-lashes are longer than Draco remembers somehow, his eyes a darker green. It’s a new position, one which lets Draco drink in the firm lines of Harry’s jaw and the way his throat bobs when he tries to compose his words. If Draco could trust himself to speak in that moment, he knows he would just say *Harry*. He sighs, instead and touches his fingers to Harry’s jaw.

“You haven’t even asked if I want to come out. Don’t you care?”

“I suppose.” Draco is also quite happy to have Harry all to himself for the time being, but he doesn’t want to go too far down that path. It’s all tied up in the aching sense that if Harry’s out and proud in the real world it will only be a matter of time before Draco’s unsavoury past and neediness comes between them. Potter might think he’s fucked up, but Draco has skeletons of his own. “Whenever you’re ready.”

Harry closes his eyes, tipping his head into the place Draco’s fingers move along his jaw. “I don’t want to hide anymore. Besides, Hermione’s desperate for someone to join our pub quiz team. Me and Ron are rubbish.”

Draco rolls his eyes. “I doubt I’m going to be welcomed onto Team Weasley-Potter in a hurry.”

“No?” Harry opens his eyes again slowly, watching Draco. “You said yourself, Hermione’s probably known about this for longer than I have.”

“Hmm.” Draco shrugs. Granger might be one thing but Weasley is another kettle of fish entirely. The thought of trying to be part of Potter’s tight-knit unit of friends and Gryffindor do-gooders makes Draco inexplicably nervous and as always seems to happen with Potter these days, he feels like he’s losing control of things. He swallows thickly and toys with the inky strands of Harry’s hair. “Ease me in gently.”

“Okay.” Harry breathes out slowly. “No quiz, not yet. No big announcement in the *Prophet*.”

Draco’s heart beats in his chest and he stares into Harry’s eyes, feeling a bit like he’s drowning. “Maybe we need a bit of time before everyone else gets involved.” A bit of time before everyone else starts telling you that you can do better, is what Draco really means but he refuses to say it out loud.

“Perhaps.” Harry’s giving Draco that shrewd look that suggests he knows exactly what’s going on. Damn those blasted Auror skills and countless hours of interrogation. “You think I’m going to give a shit what the press say? I know your past as well as anyone.”

“Then it’s going to be fine.” Draco forces a smile. “I can’t *wait* to have supper with the Weasleys. You can meet my father. I believe you’re familiar with him? He still refers to your best friend as a Mudblood and there was a time he would have given anything to see you dead. We’ll be quite the happy family.”

“Don’t.” Harry sits up, keeping his gaze on Draco. “I know what your dad’s like. I don’t think it’s going to be easy, but that doesn't mean I don't want to make it work.”

“Now you’re fighting for us?” Draco snorts softly. “You were ready to run for the hills half an hour ago. It was a toss up between staying here with me and throwing yourself into the flames. I’m not sure you’re as ready for this as you think.”

“Let me be the judge of that.” Harry’s eyebrows knit in a frown. “What’s the point of any of this if we’re still going to hide away?”

“I don’t *know*.” Draco stands, needing some space. “Just…leave if you want. I don’t care.” Draco swallows and his throat feels tight as he takes in the look on Harry’s face. The truth is he’d do a hundred thousand different things for Harry. He wonders if Harry will ever work that out – if Draco will ever pluck up the courage to tell him. He watches the way Harry’s expression falls, the frown deepening. He takes in his flushed, pink cheeks and he just wants to kiss everything away. He wants to hold Harry in a cocoon that’s just theirs and forget about the world outside for twenty-four hours at least. The thought of bringing this strange, fragile thing they have outside in the open to be shattered into smithereens makes his heart ache.

“Fine.” Harry stands, looking at the Floo. “I’ll put the fire out.”

“You do that. I’m going to bed.” Draco pointedly doesn’t look at Harry, making his way upstairs. There’s a bit of noise from downstairs then silence and Draco turns in bed, trying to stop the way his eyes prick with tears. He swallows and squeezes his eyes shut as tightly as he can, willing away the rest of his miserable thoughts. After a moment there’s a dip in the bed next to him and he rolls over, opening his eyes.

“I think I got some soot on the carpet. Maybe singed the rug a bit.” Harry looks sheepish. “Sorry.”

“That’s a Persian rug, Potter.”

“Does that mean it’s expensive?”

“I’ll send you the bill.” Draco closes his eyes for a moment. “I wasn’t sure you’d come back up.”

“’Fraid so.” Potter slips under the duvet too. It’s a bit warm and dark, but Draco can still make out the tentative expression on Potter’s face as they watch each other. “I want to know how to be with you. I want to try. There’s no rush. Just tell me what you want.”

“I don’t have the answers." Draco turns to stare at the ceiling. "I’m a fucking disaster and so are you, by all accounts. I’m pretty sure this is what’s known as the blind leading the blind.” Draco tries to collect his thoughts, feeling Harry shift beside him. "Are you going to panic if we have sex

again?" Draco swallows, suddenly determined not to be as flippant as he has been. The thing is he *does* care if Harry leaves. He care's more than he wants to acknowledge.

"No. I...I'm sorry."

Harry's voice is low and reassuring and he slides his hand into Draco's as they breathe together in the still room.

Draco turns to look at Harry. "Because it makes me...it reminds me..." Draco sucks in a breath and tries a different approach. "You're not the only one with a past. I don't like waking up alone. If you want to leave please just do it before I go to sleep, wake me up to tell me or wait until the morning. Just don't leave when I'm asleep. I hate that. I really hate that."

"I'm sorry." Harry props himself up, watching Draco. "I didn't know."

"Now you do."

Harry brushes his fingers over the marks on Draco's arm. "Those things it reminds you of. Will you tell me about them, sometime?"

"Probably one evening if you get me spectacularly drunk."

"I don't have anything to do this weekend," Harry says. He settles onto the pillow, closing his eyes with a yawn. "If you want to just…hide."

"Maybe for a while." Draco watches Harry burrow into the comfortable pillows and resists the urge to reach for him. "Just for a couple of days."

"That's fine." Harry's voice is softer now, heavy with sleep. "I'd like that."

Draco huffs but with Harry warm and pressed up against his side, it's remarkably easy to forgive him. He closes his eyes and although it takes a while for sleep to settle over him, he thinks there's a reasonable chance Harry will be there in the morning and that hope is enough to go on for now.

*

When Draco wakes, Harry's watching him with a smile playing on his lips.

"Hi."

"Hi." Draco raises his eyebrows. "Bit creepy, Potter."

"Is it?" Harry grins and he looks remarkably at ease. He's got his glasses on but not much else by the look of things and it's strangely disarming. "I'm sorry about last night. About all of it, really. I'm not going to run off again."

Draco shrugs. "You might. Don't make promises you can't keep."

"I won't." Harry's tone is firm and serious. "I'll talk, before I do. I won't panic."

"You might," Draco says again. He rolls onto his back and stares at the ceiling. "I'll probably just come after you anyway. I'm not very good at keeping away from you, it seems."

“Have you been trying?” Harry sounds a bit disgruntled and Draco snorts in response.

“Not nearly as hard as I probably should have been.”

“You mentioned books.” Harry nudges Draco in the side. It tickles. “Can I borrow them?”

“If you like.” Draco tips his head to face Harry. “Talk to me, after you read them?”

“If you want. I’m a bit of a slow reader. It drives Hermione mental.” Harry laughs and the sound fills the room with warmth. “I’ll try not to get distracted with other things.”

A wave of arousal pulses through Draco and he reaches across the space between them, running his fingers down Harry’s chest. When he speaks, his voice is rougher than usual. “I’m okay with you getting *distracted*.”

“Oh.” Harry’s eyes shutter closed for a moment and he pushes into Draco’s touch. “I thought I might speak to Charlie, too. Would you mind?”

Draco yanks his hand away and glares at Harry when he blinks his eyes open, looking put out. “I mind you talking *about* him when I’m distracting you.”

A smile plays over Harry’s lips. “Is that what you were doing?”

“Trying to.” Draco huffs and folds his arms. He’s certainly not going to rush to give Harry a thoroughly decent orgasm after that. “You’re not to shag him, Potter. I mean it.”

“Neither are you! Or anyone else.” When Draco looks at Harry again, his expression is as mutinous as Draco feels.

“Fine.” Draco rolls his eyes. “A life of celibacy. How dull.”

“I don’t think you’re celibate if you’re having sex,” Harry says. His eyes are shining and he edges closer.

“No. But neither of us are having sex, are we?” Draco arches an eyebrow at Harry.

“Not yet,” Harry replies. He gives Draco a wink which is far too sultry for someone who claims he doesn’t know how to flirt. He knows alright. The fact he thinks he doesn’t is hopelessly endearing. “But we could be if you stopped getting huffy for a moment?” He brushes his lips to the shell of Draco’s ear. “I thought you had all sorts of ideas?”

“One or two.” Draco pushes Harry back onto the bed, settling over him and snogging him senseless until they’re both hard and panting. He nips at the lobe of Harry’s ear and enjoys the way Harry shifts beneath him with a low groan of need. “Can I fuck you?”

“Yeah.” Harry might not *sound* particularly enthused but Draco knows by the way his lips part and he clutches onto Draco, hauling him into another searching kiss that words are only part of the response. By the time they break off the kiss, Harry’s murmuring “Come on, please” with quiet urgency and Draco’s absolutely done for.

“*Harry*.” Draco presses his lips to Harry’s skin, breathing in his scent. He can’t be bothered to find the lube, murmuring a spell to leave his fingers slick and he moves to slide one inside Harry, marvelling at the way he arches up as his breath leaves him in a gasp. He’s not sure he’ll ever tire

of seeing Harry like this, so hard and wanting. He doesn't care if it's been two hours or two years, he knows he wants Harry as much as he's ever wanted anything in his life before. Perhaps part of him always has.

Draco adds a second finger, slowly working Harry open in between kisses and bitten-off murmurs of pleasure. The pleas leaving Harry's lips are warm and full of want, his voice a low, ragged murmur and his breathing rough-edged and heavy. The fact that Harry likes this makes Draco even harder, the fact that it's Harry with his glasses pushed carelessly to one side on the bedside cabinet and his messy hair clinging to his perspiring forehead. The fact that it's he and Harry and everything should be so imperfect but it isn't, it just is. They just fit. Like two awkwardly shaped pieces that don't fit anywhere else. They slot together and it takes Draco's breath away.

"Where are you?" Harry's lips curve into a smile, his voice raw and a tremble running through his body as Draco curls his fingers inside Harry. "Fuck, I'm ready…please."

"Nearly. Just give me one more…minute." Draco pushes another finger into Harry and groans, biting down softly on the skin. "I'm right here," he says. "Right here."

When he thinks Harry is ready, he slicks himself while Harry watches. After a moment of catching his breath and controlling himself, he settles over Harry and nudges slowly inside him. He listens for every hitch and catch of Harry's breath, for every sign that he might not be enjoying himself. Harry's eyes meet his and after a moment of letting him adjust he moves, quick and deep. The motion draws a groan of pleasure from Harry and Draco adjusts them both until the angle makes Harry murmur his name over and over in pleasure. Draco moves slowly inside Harry, taking his time. He doesn't want this to be over. He wants to have so many more times, to shag and touch and fuck until they're both exhausted from it, but he's going to treat this as if it's the last time. He's not taking any chances that he might look back on this with regret and thinking somehow, if he might have done things differently, Harry would have stayed.

It takes him over, that wild, desperate feeling. He leaves light bruises and marks on Harry's skin as Harry pulls him in deeper, begs him to fuck harder. They find themselves in this strange back and forth battle, of taking and being taken with every last minute of unspoken desire ricocheting between them until it culminates in one more heady, unsteady kiss. Draco comes before Harry, pushing deep inside him and capturing his lips again. After a moment he slides out, registering Harry's low groan of disapproval.

"I've got you." With one more quick kiss to Harry's lips, Draco moves down his body. He's pleased to see Harry is hard and leaking and clearly so, so close. He adds a little more slick to his fingers and then he moves over Harry's cock, sucking him down and pushing two fingers deep inside Harry's body. It doesn't take long before he feels Harry pulsing in his mouth, clenching around him as Draco pulls his orgasm from him with relish.

After Harry comes, Draco sits back on his heels and wrinkles his nose as Harry blinks up at him.

"We need to shower."

"In a minute." Harry's lips twitch into a smile. "I'm feeling a bit emotional."

"*Potter*." Draco gives him a glare, although truth be told, he's feeling a bit emotional too. Harry obviously has a terrible impact on his ability to maintain a cool, aloof exterior.

“Give me a kiss, then.” Harry tugs Draco down and kisses him sweet and slow, until they are both curled up around one another and Draco’s not sure if he has the energy to get out of bed again. He slides his fingers along Harry’s spine and presses close enough to Harry to feel the steady beat of his heart.

“Was it okay?”

“It was good. Really good.” Harry tugs the duvet over them and yawns. “We’ll shower later. Sleep first.”

“Okay.” Draco closes his eyes and this time, when he wakes up, Harry’s curled on his side with his head on Draco’s chest and a small smile on his lips as if he’s having a particularly good dream.

Epilogue: Excerpt from Draco's Diary

The thing about fear is it never quite goes away. There's always going to be a niggling doubt, a moment of insecurity. It's not like war wounds fade away forever without leaving scars. The past isn't just consigned to dusty books on library shelves. The bravest have terrors they can't confront head on and inside every coward is the undiscovered potential to do something brave.

There are places in New York that sell bagels that are every colour of the rainbow. I buy one for Harry during a trip that's part business, part pleasure on one of those long, hot summer nights when the tarmac burns and the air smells sharp and stagnant. That night I find him on the balcony looking at the street. He tells me he can't believe how big the world is and says it makes him feel small. I don't need to boost his ego so I kiss him and take him to bed, but I wonder if he knows. How ***big*** *he is. How he occupies space and hearts with boundless energy and becomes this irrepressible force of nature. I wonder if he has any idea how small the world would seem without him.*

He brings piles of books with him to America and leaves them in our hotel rooms in haphazard piles, tabbed and flagged and highlighted. He's gone from 'The Daily Quidditch' to memoirs filled with activism, history and pride. Some of it our own, some of it is Muggle and in his case, the two are inseparable. He leaves, one night. He wakes me up and says he has to go for a walk and I watch him disappear into the night. That's my fear. The fear that Harry won't come back. But he does, with two enormous slices of pizza and a story about a film star and a Muggle worker from Wall Street, the only other people buying pizza from that one street seller in New York City at two in the morning.

He just needs to clear his head sometimes, when the nights are too dark and his head becomes too crowded with noise. When we're in strange cities he goes outside on a mission for a hot chocolate piled high with marshmallows, a street side snack or on occasion some tourist tat which he always puts carefully in his case and keeps next to a bit of broken mirror and a grainy photograph in a shoebox under the bed. On those rare occasions he needs to clear his head when we're at home, he heads to Hogwarts. I go with him, one night when the summer passes into winter and the air is crisp and cold. We sit with our backs to the castle walls and the grass is frosty beneath us.

We don't say much. We just look up, counting the stars.

I do the pub quiz. It's awkward at first, but a month later we have our first victory and Weasley even buys me a gin, even though he doesn't half complain about it. We crush together around one tiny table and Harry never takes his arm from the back of my chair, brushing his fingers against the nape of my neck or shifting closer so our legs touch from ankle to thigh. I suspect we might be quite nauseating to be around but I couldn't care less. I just catch Harry smiling at me out of the corner of my eye and tell him he's a creep when really nothing makes me feel as warm and content as those moments of unguarded affection.

There's a song Harry's always humming these days. Sometimes he pulls me close and dances us around until I have to distract him with something other than dancing. He really does have two left feet. I ask him what he's singing and he says he doesn't know. He heard it once, in a Muggle bar or on the radio during one of those trips when brooms weren't allowed and we had to drive Muggle cars.

He calls it our secret love song.

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